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THE MESSAGE OF JUDAISM

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THE MESSAGE OF JUDAISM

Sermons preached at the West London Synagogue

By the

REV. MORRIS JOSEPH

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To my dear Friend
Mrs. L. Lucas

PREFACE

My first volume of sermons, *The Ideal in Judaism*, appeared more than thirteen years ago. In the interval only one addition has been made to the small number of Jewish homiletical works intended for English readers. I refer to Mr. Israel Abrahams and Mr. Claude Montefiore's valuable *Aspects of Judaism*. There would thus seem to be room for a further addition, and I have accordingly yielded to the persuasions of my friends and decided to offer the present volume to the public.

The sermons here given have necessarily been chosen from a large number of discourses. I have tried to make the selection as varied as possible, in the hope of interesting diverse readers, and of affording some justification for the title I have given to the book. I would fain hope that the following pages may not only prove helpful to some of those who are trying to live their lives in the light of duty, but serve, however inadequately, to expound the message of Judaism, to illustrate its many-sided appeal to the conscience and the soul.

I would add an expression of my gratitude to Mr. Laurie Magnus for his kindness in reading the proof sheets, and for his many valuable suggestions.

M. J.

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THE MINISTER AND HIS MISSION[1]

'Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak; for I am a child. But the Lord said unto me, Say not I am a child; for on whatsoever errand I shall send thee thou shalt go, and whatsoever I shall command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid because of them; for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord.' JEREMIAH i. 6–8.

THE diffidence of the Prophet is the characteristic of his order. Isaiah, Ezekiel, Moses himself, are afraid when the heavenly vision first visits them. But the feeling yields at last to the inspiration. *That* is imperious, and will brook no restraint. And so with our prophet: 'I cannot speak,' he cries, 'for I am a child.' But swiftly the loving rebuke comes to him: 'Say not I am a child; for on whatsoever errand I shall send thee thou shalt go; be not afraid, for I am with thee to deliver thee'; and then a Hand is put forth, and touches his mouth, and because the word is in his mouth,

[1] Sermon preached on Sabbath, September 9, 1893, on the Author's induction as minister of the West London Synagogue.

he needs must speak. The message brings the courage and the strength wherewith to deliver it.

To the modern Jewish pastor, though he must necessarily approach it with an infinitely more slender equipment, is committed the Divine task that was entrusted to the ancient seers of his race. It is an inspiring thought—that of being among the spiritual heirs of an Isaiah, a Jeremiah, a Micah—of having been chosen to carry on the work of winning souls for God, which evoked so pathetic a self-surrender, so sublime a scorn of consequence, from the great Hebrew Prophets. And yet the last feeling that this sense of kinship with the great minds of the past should arouse is one of pride or of excessive self-confidence. The minister, however experienced, who feels that pride, declares himself, by the very fact, to be out of touch with the ancient seers. Upon him no mission has been bestowed ; to him no call has come. Quite otherwise will be the temper of the true pastor. His hold on the great verities of religion will become firmer, his outlook on life, his insight into human weakness and needs will grow with time ; but this experience, this spiritual growth, will beget a consciousness, not of strength, but of weakness. To the end of his days he will know himself to be but a child—a child in the Divine knowledge, the infinitude of

which he apprehends more clearly each day, a child in his unpreparedness for the highest of all the tasks entrusted to mortals. The minister who is sure of himself, sure that he is fitted for his work, and that he is doing it in the best possible way, stands self-condemned. His vision of God is dim ; his knowledge of men is poor.

For truly it is a momentous task—that of speaking in the name of the living God, and imparting to other souls the message that has been communicated to one's own. Is there any enterprise that can for a single moment be compared to it for the magnitude, the awfulness, of the issues it involves ? Life, Responsibility, God—the words are easily spoken, but they stand for ideas unutterably solemn. To make manifest to the unthinking mind the reality of the Divine ; to establish the truth that Nature is more than matter and blind force, Man more than the breath of his body, life more than existence, and to make this truth fruitful, so that it may become an inspiration, the source of a sustained effort after right-doing ; to proclaim the supremacy of the moral law and the folly as well as the shame of those who violate it ; to win assent for the everlasting doctrine of self-renunciation as the only basis for the conduct of life and the only key to its mystery—this is the minister's mission, unique in its significance

and in its far-reaching purpose. With that mission are intimately bound up the most vital interests of his flock. Upon its success it depends whether God is to be justified, and the souls He has made are to be saved, whether men are to be happy or miserable, able to smile when the chastisements of life are heaviest, or doomed to a corroding despair that can discern neither love nor order in human destiny. This is the task to which the minister is called. Is there any man who, catching a glimpse of its solemn meaning, can undertake it with a light heart? Even the most gifted must feel that his powers are unspeakably small compared with the immensity of the work that has been confided to him. It needs Heaven-touched lips to tell the Divine story; it needs the pleading of an angel to gain hearts for the angelic way.

And then there is the difficulty that lies in the revolution which recent years have witnessed in men's religious conceptions. We live in an age of spiritual unrest. Science, philosophy, criticism, are making fresh contributions to knowledge every day, some involving new adjustments of the theological position. Judaism does not, any more than other religions, remain untouched by these great movements of thought. It is ever putting on new forms. Which of them shall the preacher advocate? What is the Judaism he will preach? It is

a momentous choice—one that he must needs make with a misgiving that is only proportionate to his conscientiousness. Two conflicting considerations will struggle within him for mastery. There is the fear of advancing too fast and therefore dangerously; there is the dread of stagnation—stagnation which chokes the springs of the religious life. On the one hand there are the claims of traditional Judaism—that wondrous system, to the slow building up of which have gone the spiritual energy, the courage and the devotion of three thousand years—a system to which we are bound by our very heart-strings, and which we dare not wantonly weaken without incurring the guilt of treachery. On the other hand there are the age in which we live, with its changed conditions, its new ideas and teachings, the soul within us, with its longings and its needs, so different, in spite of a fundamental identity, from those of our forefathers. And there are the diverse wants of the age itself—the conflict of religious conceptions which is often manifested in the same congregation. If the conservatism of those who can find rest for their souls in the old paths calls for the utmost sympathy and the most tender respect, not less worthy of a hearing is the cry for new vesture in which to clothe the old verities, that goes forth from minds of a different type, and above all from the young men and women to

whom will be confided the destinies of the Synagogue, of Judaism, in the immediate future. How shall the Jewish pastor decide between these two streams of tendency ? With long and painful heartsearchings must he ponder the problem, and only with soul uplifted in prayer for God's guiding light and truth can he hope to find the solution.

And yet side by side with all this misgiving there must be a wholesome, a becoming self-reliance. ' On whatsoever errand I shall send thee thou shalt go, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.' Once the call has come, once the preacher feels that the greatest of all missions has been entrusted to him, he must put his whole soul into his work. The Word must inspire him, encourage him. There must be no weak shrinking from the task that is proffered to him, for He who proffers it is God Himself, and with it He offers His saving, His all-sufficient help. ' Be not afraid because of them,' cries the Divine Voice to the Prophet. He is warned against the unworthy self-distrust which dreads the hostility of men, which is daunted by mere difficulty—the self-distrust that is the veriest cowardice. For the preacher, as for the Prophet, the thought must suffice that God is with him to deliver him. Face to face with the things of the spirit, he must be modest, full of a beautiful misgiving ; con-

fronted with lower things—with the antagonism, the obduracy of those to whom he offers blessing, confronted with his own indolence, his own self-love—he must be full of an equally beautiful confidence. In Rabbinic phrase, he must be ' strong as a lion to do the will of his Father in Heaven.' The truth may be unpalatable, but he will preach it because it is the truth. He will lash folly and vice though they are fashionable. He will advocate the life of self-sacrifice, though self-indulgence is the note of the age. He will rouse the heart to a consciousness of its moral position, though men hate to know their true selves, and dearly love to be left undisturbed in their pleasant, deceptive dreams.

And if he does not spare his flock, he will not spare himself. He will grudge no labour that promises to bring his mission nearer to realization. He will deem no effort too great that may lead an erring soul one step along the path that lies between it and Heaven, or that may make the heavy eyes bright with a glimpse of the Almighty, or that may raise the suffering heart sunk beneath some of the many burdens of life. He will think of every one's needs save his own ; but he will fear no one's face save God's. And so his words, his heart, will go out to all alike—his words which preach fearlessly the Divine word to high and low—his heart which feels both for rich and poor, for the

rich in their temptations, for the poor in their misery. To neither will he show favour. The one shall recognize the sin of selfishness, the other the sin of unjust repining. Each shall learn from the other, each minister to the other. The pastor shall be the loving servant of both.

This is the ideal. I would fain try to realize it. I would diligently seek after the prophetic humility, the sense of the disparity between the grandeur of my work and my ability to do it. But I would be true also to the other side of the picture. I would be fearless in the discharge of my duties to you all. I would be true to truth, true to myself, true to the God whose work I would do. I would teach you the Divine way, win you for the Divine life. I would dispel your doubts, strengthen you in your conflict with self, help you to bear your sorrows. Ah, if you would let me be your friend—your friend especially in times of grief, of care, of perplexity, at those terrible moments when life seems so cruel, duty so hard—moments when religion is the only steadying, the only consoling voice—how thankful should I be!

But I would think of you and toil for you not only as individual souls, but as a congregation, which, if it is to fulfil its characteristic function of ministering to the wants of the soul, and aiding to build up a stable Judaism in these times of stress and difficulty, must strengthen

its aspirations and invigorate its search after a congregational life. I would join my colleagues, your ministers, in the effort to make this synagogue both a spiritual centre and a rallying-point for dormant beneficent activities. I would help to make union your watchword—union which shall band you together for all good, and gracious, and holy works, but which, overpassing the limits of the congregation, shall knit you faster still into the life of the community. Never can I affect to minimize the difference of view which theoretically severs us from so many of our brethren. The venerated founders of this synagogue would not have resorted to the extreme step of secession, had they not felt that they had important principles to assert. But they would have been the last to affirm that those principles should be a barrier that hinders us from toiling freely and lovingly with our brethren in the philanthropic and religious domains common to us all. The religious domain I say ; for every section of Israel, whatever its theological opinions, seeks the same end—the wellbeing of Judaism and the health of the individual soul. This is the one transcendent bond that unites us all in spite of our differences. Even those differences are a link. Reform and Conservatism are assuredly working together to make up that many-sided Judaism which

flashes light and comfort from its numerous facets upon widely diverse minds, and which finds in this manifold influence the surest pledge of its future survival.

To that future we reformers cannot be indifferent; but it is in a spirit of veneration for the past that we shall assuredly work for it. We shall ever look to the rock from which we have been hewn, nor forget that the Judaism of to-day is the product of ages of spiritual endeavour, from which to sever it is to slay it. Progress will be our watchword as of old; but, as of old, it must be the genuine progress which, like the artificers of the ancient temple, grasps with one hand the weapon that defends its own, and with the other holds the building tool wherewith to fashion the fabric of a truly Jewish life. For there is something greater even than Reform, and that is Religion. More important than how we worship is how we live. Reform is not a synonym for indifference to the things of the spirit, for the relaxation of the wholesome discipline imposed by Judaism; it is the watchword of those who are anxiously seeking after God, patiently striving by humility, by self-conquest, by loving deeds, to found on earth the Kingdom of Heaven.

This, most of all, will be the keynote of my message to you in the coming days. May this congregation be foremost in the noble striving

which alone can ensure the justification of our race and our faith in the sight of the world, and may I share in the blessed privilege of successfully impelling you to the high enterprise! I would that this congregation might vie with and excel all others not only in devotion to the principles of enlightened religion, not only in a courageous proclamation of the rights of the intellect, but in fidelity to the ideals that have been consistently cherished by the noblest souls in Israel throughout the ages, and in the strenuous quest of the noble life. I will try to do my part to bring the aspiration nearer to fulfilment. It can be but a little, at best; but without a sympathetic response from you, without your indulgence and cheerful co-operation, it will be nought. With you, then, I plead. Give me your hearts' good will. Pray for me, so that haply I may win, though all unworthily, the blessing of the Divine Master I strive to serve.

O God, in this solemn moment I lift up my eyes to Thee. Vouchsafe to me Thy help in the great task that lies before me—not for my sake, for I am unworthy of the least of all Thy mercies, but for Thine own sake, for the sake of the holy cause to which I would devote myself. Show me Thy way. Show me how I may lead this people nearer to Thee, how I may win them for Thy service. Give me grace in

their sight. Help me to find the way to their hearts, so that I may aid them to attain to the godly life, not keep them back from it.

Heavenly Father, to Thee all my imperfections are known. But heed them not, I beseech Thee. Think not of what I am, but of what I would be. Give me strength ; give me knowledge ; give me earnestness. Answer me, O Lord my God. Show me a token for good. Let me hear Thy voice saying ' Be strong and of good courage ' ; for Thou alone art my hope, O God, my Rock and my Redeemer. Amen.

REFORM AND REFORMERS

This is a Reform congregation. What does Reform mean? What is the Reformer's specific duty? These are obviously questions of the utmost importance for us. Let us think about them a little.

And first it may not be superfluous to point out that Reform does mean something. Not all of us, I am afraid, are very clear as to this point. It is only a couple of days ago that a letter from a stranger reached me, asking to be informed as to the salient features of Reform-teaching and practice. But such a request from outside ought to cause us no surprise, seeing that not a few Reformers themselves need to be taught their own creed, to learn that Reform means a great deal more than the Organ and no Second-day Festival. If any one were to tell such persons that Reform stands for a great, a sacred principle, of which these things are but symbols, I am afraid they would not understand him.

There are others who certainly look a little deeper. They see that Reform does stand for

something more than the Organ and no Second-day Festival. They do identify it with a principle ; but it is the principle of Revolt. Its great charm for them is that it stands for Dissent, that it is an incarnate protest against the accepted ideas and practices of Jewry. They like to think of themselves as religious free-lances. To this class belong the people who have thrown in their lot with Reform because it seems to sanction laxity. The restraints of Religion sit heavily upon them, and Reform appears to offer them an opportunity of comfortably throwing off those restraints. And of that opportunity they make the most. Because Reform allows freedom in some things, therefore, they argue, it must mean freedom in most things. They abolish the Second-day Festival, but a great deal besides. Certain dietary laws have been relaxed, and the fact becomes their authority for disregarding other restrictions more important because more vital to the moral and religious life. And so Reform becomes a synonym for licence, to its detriment as a religious force and to its injury in the estimation of non-Reformers. ' You Reformers', we are told, ' have no principles ; you make Religion purely a matter of convenience, and in time, so far as you are concerned, you will destroy Religion altogether.' And it must be confessed that there is some truth in the accusa-

tion. If we take our congregation as a whole, we cannot sincerely say that its religious life is vigorous. The great available test by which to measure the religiousness of a congregation is attendance at public worship, and that in our case is admittedly bad. And though it may be urged that in many instances the desire to attend exists, but cannot be gratified owing to the Sabbath-difficulty and other causes, the objection has little force. A congregation that really desires to worship will find the means of gratifying its desire. It will not be stopped altogether by difficulties. If it cannot overcome them it will turn them. The religious life must needs be feeble that fails to create the one great opportunity for its expression.

To say this, however, is to impeach not Reform, but Reformers. If the religious tone of our congregation is unsatisfactory, it is simply because so large a number of our members do not realize the responsibilities which their membership imposes upon them. They either attach no meaning to Reform, or they attach a wrong meaning to it. If they understood it—if they rose to the height of its great argument—it would kill straightway all the apathy with which we are so frequently charged. Reform, if it had its way, would make a nearly empty synagogue impossible ; it would make a low spirituality impossible ; it would make

every religious evil under the sun impossible. It would be an inspiration lifting every one of us to the highest plane of aspiration and achievement.

And this is the point I particularly wish to emphasize. Reform, unquestionably, has its theoretical side. It has sanctioned certain relaxations of Jewish law, certain modifications of Jewish doctrine, and in so doing it has affirmed the principle that Religion, in order to live, must adapt itself to the shifting ideas of successive ages. This is a valuable principle which we cannot too warmly cherish, or too strenuously uphold. And let us remember that it is far more valuable, far worthier of being cherished, than the relaxations in which it has found expression, though many of us think the very contrary. In maintaining that principle, and not in teaching Orthodox Jews the beauty of a decorous Service or the superfluousness of the Second-day Festival, lies the external mission of Reform. I say the external mission. For Reform has another and a still higher mission to fulfil—a mission to the Reformer himself. Progressive Religion is a great idea, but progressive goodness is a far greater one. Reform has, first and chiefly, to convert those who have ranged themselves under its banner to nobler ideals of living. This is the great truth which nearly all of us miss. Reform is

not a movement merely ; it is a religion, a life. It is not a protest only ; it is an affirmation—not only a protest against certain errors, real or fancied, in the conventional conception of Judaism, but the affirmation of a desire, an intention, to cling faster than ever to all that is true and beautiful in Judaism. It is not merely the expression of a creed, negative or positive, but a pledge binding those who identify themselves with it to the highest ideal of conduct, to a higher ideal even than that which contents the non-Reformer. This definition, I doubt not, will surprise you. ' Why ', you will say, ' should we Reformers be more bound, morally and religiously, than other Jews ? ' The answer is obvious—because we are *less* bound, *ritually and ceremonially*, than other Jews. We are more free in one sense ; shall we accept that freedom without giving something in return, or, worse still, make it a pretext for stealing a wider and far less desirable freedom ? Why has the yoke of the Ceremonial Law been lightened for us ? Surely in order to place us under the yoke of a higher law, to set our energies free for the truly religious life. If we do not believe this, then we degrade Reform to the level of mere convenience and selfishness. We make it a force acting not on the side of Religion, but against it. Instead of justifying the movement initiated with such

true piety, such pathetic self-denial, sixty years ago, we condemn it. We throw stones at the graves of our religious forefathers! Moreover, the practical is the only logical result of the theoretical. Progress, we rightly say, is the very life-blood of Religion. But surely the only possible proofs of this truth are those that we make with our own lives. Only when the Reformer shows himself more religious, more God-fearing, nobler, purer, than other Jews, is his separateness vindicated, and Reform justified in the only way in which she can be justified—of her children.

And so the duty of the Reformer plainly emerges. It is to look upon Reform as a challenge to all that is best in himself. He must be to the Jews at large what the Jews ought to be to the world. If Israel ought to regard himself as the choice first-fruits of mankind, the Reformer must be the first-fruits of Israel, representing all that is finest in the Jewish character and life. The specific duty of Israel to the world will press upon him with double force, seeing that he is not only a Jew, but a Reform Jew. He fights for the King, but he fights in the King's body-guard![1]

No one ought to join a synagogue like ours without grasping at least some part of this con-

[1] For the original idea see the Siphra to Leviticus xix. 1.

ception of Reform. Some years ago there was an ultra-orthodox Rabbi in Germany who declined to admit any one as a member of his congregation who would not forswear the use of a razor. It was a grotesque condition; but it represented the desire of the Rabbi to make his congregation a truly religious brotherhood as he understood the phrase. As such, his action is not without its lesson for us. If this congregation is ever to understand its mission, as the necessary step towards fulfilling it, its members must enrol themselves with solemn feelings, far different from those with which they enrol themselves to-day. To join this synagogue must be a well-considered act—one voluntarily, but none the less indissolubly, binding the men and women who take it to the loftiest conception of right-doing which they are capable of forming. Membership of this congregation will then be no light thing. It will not spring from selfish motives or from no motives in particular. People will join this synagogue not because it provides special facilities for marriage or burial, or because it offers a convenient refuge for those who have had a personal quarrel with Orthodoxy, or even because its Services are orderly and its music is tuneful. They will join it because its membership implies a summons and a self-consecration to the higher life. They will join it, then, under a strong and solemn sense of ethical and religious responsibility.

And so Reform will obtain its fullest, its only, real justification. We shall be indeed the ' holy congregation ' we style ourselves in our Sabbath Prayers ; for we shall be an association that exists exclusively for the promotion of Religion—the holiest of all causes. There will be no enmity among us, ' causeless ' or otherwise. The peace and the sanctity that reign in God's House will find their image and their fruit in the personal lives of those who worship in it. Its congregants will seek the means of subsistence in clean and honest toil, scorning—yes, scorning, and not merely dreading—every occupation that soils the conscience and degrades the character. They will be known as Reformers in the best sense of the word—as those who have helped to form anew the moral life of Israel and to vitalize it afresh as a world-wide force.

' Ah,' you will cry, ' this is but a dream, an ideal too lofty for us weak mortals to realize.' It may be so ; but let us at least keep the ideal before us and strive to reach it, for only by the effort shall we make any progress towards the goal upon which our hearts are set. ' The better we may reach, but not the best ; but no one ever found the better who did not aim at the best ! ' [1] The one hope for this congre-

[1] Moncure Conway : *Idols and Ideals*, page 183.

gation, the one hope for Judaism, lies in its adherents dreaming nobly, and in suffering their dreams to impart to their lives a tinge of the Divine.

WHY I GO TO SYNAGOGUE

'WHY I do not go to Synagogue' is the title of an article that appears in the current number of the *Jewish Quarterly Review*.[1] It suggests the subject of my discourse this morning. I should like to show why we do, or should, go to synagogue. In other words, I would ask you to consider what are the true character and functions of Jewish public worship. What is its essential significance, and what ought we to expect it to do for us? The inquiry is justifiable, not as a reply to a writer whose frankly-avowed convictions place him beyond the reach of arguments such as I shall employ, but as a possible means of removing some misconceptions widespread among conforming Jews.

It is often urged that the liturgy is antiquated, that, though it was doubtless well adapted to the requirements of past generations, it makes only an imperfect response to modern needs. That there is some foundation for the com-

[1] Vol. xiii., p. 63.

plaint is not to be questioned. We, as a congregation, have practically recognized its justice in the modifications of the service which we have introduced at various periods during the past sixty years. Nor is there room to doubt that, as the necessity for further changes is brought home to the majority of us, the policy thus proclaimed will receive fresh applications.

But there is an important consideration of which we dare not lose sight. The effectiveness of public worship depends not upon one thing, but upon two. It depends not only upon the abstract appropriateness of the service, but also upon the power of the worshipper to respond to its appeal. You may modernize the prayer-book as much as you please ; you may remove all its anachronisms, its supplications for the restoration of the sacrificial rite, its petitions for Zion, its 'anthropomorphisms,' but you will not thereby ensure prayerful feeling. This only the worshipper himself can supply ; and he can supply it only if he bear the elements of it in his own breast—in his faith in the Unseen, and his desire to surrender himself to the Unseen. It is because people forget this fundamental truth that so many unmerited accusations are brought against our public worship. They condemn the service when they ought rather to blame themselves. They leave the synagogue unrefreshed, unhelped—to use their

own expressions, irritated, alienated. But they do not see that much of this failure is chargeable on their own lack of devoutness, their own want of spiritual preparedness, on a frame of mind, cold, sceptical, irresponsive, which would suffice to make even the ideal service uninspiring and barren. In admitting that he has no sympathy with the services of the synagogue, the writer in the *Jewish Quarterly Review* has set down his own condemnation. One almost inevitably asks whether there is any conceivable form of worship with which he *could* sympathize.

To say it for the hundredth time, public worship, whether it be that of the Synagogue or the Church, can give us back only what we bring to it. Let us come to it with expectant, trustful hearts, with faith in God and in the power of prayer, and our pious emotions will be transmuted by a wondrous alchemy into peace and comfort and strength—into all those heavenly boons which are the choice flower and fruit of worship. But let us appear empty-handed before God in His chosen place, and we shall assuredly go away unsatisfied. 'From the Lord is the answering of the tongue'; but then 'to man belongs the ordering of the heart.'[1] The divine Guest can enter the chamber of the

[1] Proverbs xvi. 1.

soul, only when it is made ready for its glorious Visitant.

But there is more to be said. We take another wrong view of public worship. We forget that it *is* public, and not private worship, and that, therefore, what we ought to expect from it is not an exact response to each individual mood, but merely a vehicle for the utterance of common needs and common hopes. A public service no doubt does greatly help each single soul to lay its petitions and its praise at the divine footstool. Here and there a prayer, a phrase, in the liturgy may chance to harmonize with the dominant feeling of the individual heart, and that heart is straightway alight with the glow of worship. And even if this does not happen, the very atmosphere of prayer which surrounds the congregant in God's consecrated house, the magnetic influence of the worshipping assembly, will often suffice to quicken devotional feeling. But more than this cannot fairly be demanded. It is much indeed that the slumbering soul is awakened, that it is incited to commune with God or with itself. But to imagine that public worship, which is designed for the many, can on every occasion faithfully interpret the sentiments of each congregant is to mistake its purpose, nay, to look for what is obviously impossible. It may move us to frame our own special prayers—our suppli-

cations for the blessings we need, our thanksgiving for the blessings we have; it cannot always take—it can but rarely take—the place of those prayers.

Again, the fact is too commonly overlooked that in the Service the community, and not merely the congregation, prayerfully expresses itself. Just as in Christian places of worship the assemblage prays for and as the Church, so in the Synagogue it prays on behalf and as the representative of Israel. Hence the inclusion in the liturgy of passages which, though they have not the slightest bearing upon the worshipper's everyday troubles and difficulties, yet are calculated to stir him deeply, seeing that they make a strong appeal to his racial and historic sympathies. The Deity invoked is not only the God of mankind, the Lord of Heaven and earth, but 'the Holy One who dwelleth amid the praises of Israel,' 'the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.'

Is it possible to overrate the force or the value of these historic sympathies? Is there any Jew, worthy of the name, who would willingly see them die? Is there not something uplifting in the thought that, as we stand side by side with our brethren in the Synagogue, we are linked by the mystic bond of worship to the entire House of Israel, past as well as present? The act of public prayer unites us in spirit with the hundreds of

Jewish congregations all over the world. It binds us by mighty links to the dead. For the time being we are the representatives of a great religious brotherhood. In us is gathered up all the storied splendour of Israel. We *are* Israel —the Israel that was ransomed from hateful tyranny, that stood at God's feet to receive the Law, that has been martyred for the faith, that has given the world a Moses and an Isaiah, an Akiba and a Maimonides. We feel the dignity, the sacredness, the responsibility of our religious state. We know ourselves the heirs to a great spiritual tradition which, while it ennobles us by its grandeur, impels us to self-ennoblement by its inspiring message. The Past stretches out its hands to us, and, upheld by it, we turn with courage to face the Future. We are no longer a mere sect, which plays its little part in the great story of Religion and then disappears, but a people, with all a people's high destiny and power of survival. And thus it is that Judaism has perpetuated itself. Because it is an historic religion, because, rooted in the past, it can live and thrive in the ever-changing present, because it can inflame the souls of its adherents with the thought of the imposing procession of saints and martyrs that has traversed the centuries, and which is for ever summoning them to join it, because, in a word, there is such a thing as

Israel, past, living, and still to be, therefore does it make a new appeal to the heart in every generation, and never does it make it in vain.

And it is chiefly through the synagogue that it voices its claim. Here the historic Israel lives an ever new life, realizes itself constantly afresh. Here the recruits of the great army of the Lord take the oath of fidelity, are heartened for the fight. Here the Sabbath and the Feast-day become signs of the covenant between God and the people He has called and consecrated. Here worship, taking on the widest attributes, passes from an act of individual communion into a solemn expression of fellowship between the members of a vast household that extends over the earth and through time, and again between them and their Divine Master.

It is in this light that we must regard our public worship if we would understand its true significance. Those who are discontented with it, who find it unsatisfying, are just those who fail so to regard it. They come to it with unsympathetic minds, and then complain that they cannot sympathize with it. They come to it as Theists, not as Jews, and while really finding it too broad for them, imagine that it is too narrow. 'They know not, neither do they understand; they walk to and fro in darkness.' They are colour-blind, and yet criticize the blue of the firmament.

I do not know whether the sympathetic spirit, without which the synagogue service must needs be a sealed book, is to be acquired by those who have it not. What I do know is that it is easily lost by those who have it, that the historic consciousness, the sense of kinship with Israel, quickly becomes atrophied by disuse, and with it there passes from us a potent source of noble inspiration. Therefore let us be on our guard. If we have this priceless sympathy, let us cherish it and deepen it. And further, let us see that we kindle it in the hearts of our children—those fresh young hearts that respond so readily, so generously, to every earnest call, that treasure so faithfully every vision that comes to them from the romantic Past. For only thus shall we lay the foundations of a vigorous Judaism in the coming days. Only thus shall we ensure to Israel's worship the vitality and the power which have been its attributes through the centuries.

HEBREW AND THE SYNAGOGUE

'And they read in the book, in the Law of God, distinctly, and they gave the sense, so that they understood the reading.' NEHEMIAH viii. 8.

THE incident is part of the story of the religious revival which coincided with the return from the Babylonian captivity. The people are gathered together in one of the broad places or squares in Jerusalem, and the Book of the Law is solemnly read to them. The manner of that reading is notable. It is a reading from the original, and therefore in Hebrew, but it is accompanied by a translation or exposition in the vernacular. For the aim of those who have organized this impressive gathering is not to be realized by any perfunctory recital. It is not enough for them that the people should hear the sacred Word; they must understand it as the essential preliminary to obeying it. The incident, I say, is noteworthy. Ezra and Nehemiah are often regarded as fierce and narrow zealots, the forerunners of a long line of teachers who were more heedful of the letter of the Law than of its spirit. And yet it is these so-called zealots, or legalists, who,

moved by the highest religious motives, supplement the reading of the Scriptures in the original language with a rendering in the vulgar tongue. Their ordinance became a precedent. Sabbath after Sabbath, in the Talmudic age, the regular readings from the Pentateuch in the synagogue were interpreted by a special official, the *meturgeman*, for the edification of the unlearned. This was the act of the zealots. A proposal to imitate it in our public worship to-day would, I fear, evoke no small protest from many who like to be known as liberals. On the other hand, the arrangement described in the text had nothing revolutionary about it. The vernacular interpretation supplemented the Hebrew readings; it did not supersede them. The wise-hearted men of Ezra's age recognized the value of timely and moderate concessions as safeguards of the religion they were pledged to preserve. But they kept the end steadily in view as well as the means, and treated it as paramount. And so they clung jealously to the Hebrew itself, whilst sanctioning its interpretation in the language of the people; for they knew that, among the bulwarks of the religious consciousness in Israel, there was none more powerful, and that if it were expelled from public worship, with it would vanish much of the Jewish spirit, regard for which had prompted their concessions.

It seems to me that their sagacious policy should furnish the keynote of our own. Two conflicting motives influence us to-day. On the one hand there is the desire to bring the service of the synagogue into organic relation with the living needs of the worshipper, and there is the desire, on the other hand, to make it subserve its historic purpose—that of keeping alive the Jewish consciousness, of safeguarding the beliefs and the sympathies, the hopes and the ideals, which constitute the special heritage of Israel. Here are two somewhat antagonistic aims, and the problem is how to do justice to both. It is not enough, as some of us too hastily think, if we make provision, exclusively or even chiefly, for the wants of the individual worshipper. The corporate worshipper, the Israel, of whose religious life, above all, the synagogue service is the expression, must also not be forgotten. Both considerations must be taken into account in fixing the character of the service, in framing its ritual, in determining what ideas its prayers should embody, and what things they should ask for. They must be borne in mind also in choosing the language of the service. As regards this last point, the principle adopted by Ezra and Nehemiah still descrves to be honoured. If the vernacular is introduced into the synagogue, it must be under conditions that will not jeopardize

the objects which it is the essential mission of the synagogue to promote. The vernacular must be the auxiliary to the sacred tongue ; it must not rival it, much less dethrone it.

And in saying this I am not losing sight of current events. Last Sabbath, the first of a new series of services [1] was held, in which English is to occupy the predominant place. Now, it is quite possible to defend this particular feature of those services, and yet to maintain the thesis I have just laid down. The prayer meetings of which I am speaking are in no sense to be considered as taking the place of the synagogue worship. Rightly viewed, they can never take its place, as the promoters of the new movement, without exception, would admit. That movement has not been initiated in a spirit of the smallest hostility to the synagogue. On the contrary, it is designed to be ancillary to it. And I can well imagine some of the speakers at those meetings taking the opportunity of pleading for the synagogue with their audience, and appealing to them for a better attendance at its services. But if there is no real antagonism between the old order and the new, there is also fundamentally no analogy between them. They are to be judged by different standards. What may be legiti-

[1] The Services of the Jewish Religious Union.

mate in the one case may be dangerous in the other. Hebrew must still remain, if not the exclusive, at least the chief, language of the synagogue services. But before I proceed to justify this contention, let me add just another explanatory word. There seems to be an uneasy feeling abroad that these new services will injure the synagogue by still further diminishing its regular congregations. Personally, I believe these fears to be groundless. But if they were realized, no one would be more sorry than myself. It would cause me the greatest pain to think that a single one of those who hitherto have so devotedly supported our Sabbath Morning Service by their presence should withdraw their allegiance and transfer it to the new movement. I should regret it on personal grounds as the severance of the sympathetic tie which a common worship necessarily establishes between the minister and his congregants. But I should deplore it for other and weightier reasons too. The ordinary Sabbath congregation here and elsewhere is already scanty enough in all conscience; it cannot afford to lose even one of its constituents. Moreover, it is desirable to point out that these new services are primarily intended, not for synagogue-goers, but for those persons who, for one reason or another, habitually absent themselves from the synagogue. If there were no such

persons, these services would never have been established. And, therefore, while, in my judgment, there would be nothing improper in any of our regular worshippers attending these meetings, it would be a serious misfortune if their attendance involved the slightest neglect of the synagogue service. It would be a misfortune for the synagogue, which would be deprived by such defections of part of its vitality ; it would be a misfortune for the absentees, who would be cut off from those inspiring influences which, as we shall see, it is the characteristic office of the synagogue to exert. The truth is that, in judging the function of public worship, we too often fail to get the right perspective. We think we have unanswerably condemned the synagogue when we have declared its services to be archaic and their language obsolete. The demand that its worship shall make some response to the spiritual needs of the individual is a natural and a reasonable demand. But there are other and even higher claims that it has to satisfy, and its especial mission is to satisfy them. To repeat what I have said already, the synagogue service is essentially the expression of the soul of collective Israel. In the synagogue we meet as Jews, there in prayer, in aspiration, in confession of faith, to carry on the stream of spiritual effort which has flowed unbroken through the ages ever since

Israel became conscious of himself. Therefore its service, though it is rightly so contrived as to impinge upon the experience of the individual soul at this point or at that, is essentially historic, in a qualified sense let me say national. It links us with all the past of our race ; it joins us in prayerful communion with the living Israel all over the world. If this be the characteristic function of our public worship, then you will see that its form must be carefully chosen. It must be so chosen as to preserve and vivify that corporate conscience of which I have spoken. It must keep ever before the mind of the worshipper the impressive fact that he comes of ancestors who stood at Sinai, or were of the multitude that thronged the courts of Zion, or who belonged to the noble army of martyrs which has lived and died for Jewish truth. Therefore the prayers will not merely voice private needs and modern ideas, but will chiefly speak of Israel, of his past story, of his present joy and woe, of his coming triumph. And so they will largely be in Hebrew, Israel's historic language. Whatever form Jewish worship may take elsewhere, in the synagogue it must retain the peculiar stamp given to it by the sacred tongue.

Here, then, we have a powerful argument for a revival of Hebrew studies. The neglect with which those studies are treated threatens the

stability of the synagogue. How can we expect our public worship to exert its rightful empire over our children in the after years if we take no pains to familiarize them with the language of its services ? You may urge that the difficulty may be readily solved by abolishing Hebrew and substituting English. But that will not solve the difficulty. It will merely evade it. You will get rid of Hebrew, but with it of the synagogue too, of the synagogue as a living organism, as the well-spring of Jewish feeling and the inspiration of the Jewish life. Nor is this all. The claim of Hebrew, though bound up with the interests of public worship, yet transcends them. Drive the sacred language out of the synagogue and that claim will meet you elsewhere. It will meet you whenever you open your Jewish history, whenever you open your Bible. Hebrew might cease to be the language of public prayer to-morrow, and yet its title to our allegiance would be as imperious as ever. As long as we remain Jews the language which has helped so powerfully to feed our historic consciousness must be unspeakably precious to us. While we call the Bible our own, our charter, the oracles of God, the tongue in which it is written must be inestimably sacred for us. Is there any one among us with soul so dead as to be impervious to the appeal thus addressed to it ? Old races, like the

Welsh, the Scotch, the Irish, lovingly cherish their ancient speech. Shall we Jews, with even mightier incentives to move us, show less ardour? Among the multitude of new Jewish societies which the past few years have brought into existence how is it that there is not one aiming at the promotion of the study of Israel's historic language? Is it quite hopeless to look for the dawn of a better day? Nor am I thinking only of a merely academic revival, though that is needed sorely enough. Shall not Hebrew recover part at least of its old place in our educational system? Want of time, over-pressure of compulsory studies, these are the familiar arguments against it. But is there not just a little insincerity in the plea? Are there not many subjects studied nowadays, a knowledge of which is not essential to success in life? Might not some of these, some too of the so-called 'accomplishments' which girls toil so hard to acquire, be deposed in favour of this time-honoured, this sacred study? All that is needed is a revival of enthusiasm for Jewish things. Suppose that parents were to speak to their children in this wise: 'Remember that Hebrew is Israel's language, part of his patrimony; to study it ought to be, for the Jew, both a point of honour and a privilege. But those only deserve to study it who look upon it in this light. Will you not give yourselves

to it thus lovingly ?' Do you not think that such an appeal would go straight to the generous heart of the child ? I am sure it would. And the arrow would hit the mark all the more surely because a parent's affection had winged it.

I shall probably be told that, in suggesting that Hebrew should be cultivated from historic motives, I am giving a counsel of perfection, asking for the impossible. Well, perhaps I am. But this I know, that if such appeals to the Jewish conscience are doomed to fail, Israel's cause is lost, and there is nothing left for us but to bring our services, both within and without the synagogue, to a final close as quickly and as decently as we can.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE SABBATH

'Blessed is the man that doeth this; . . . that keepeth the Sabbath from profaning it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil.' ISAIAH lvi. 2.

WE live in an age of holiday-making; but also in an age that abhors rest. It is a paradox, but it is none the less true. Men eagerly seize every opportunity of escape from their daily work, only to plunge into feverish activities of another kind. We have Bank Holiday Bills and Saturday Closing Bills in increasing number nowadays; but the result is not greater leisure for meditation or for the cultivation of the higher life, but merely a diversion of physical energies into a new channel. It is commonly urged that the strain of the modern struggle for existence necessitates these frequent intervals of recreation; and no doubt there is some truth in the plea. But that it does not contain the whole truth is proved by the fact that those who work hardest at holiday-making are those who work least at anything else. There are people who do no-

thing all the year round and take a holiday once a week.

That the characteristic tendency of the times of which I am speaking has its good side, I should be the last to deny. But that it has its drawbacks is also not to be gainsaid. One of them is the growing neglect of spiritual things. The Sabbath particularly suffers. Stand in any great highway of London on a Sunday morning, and you will see regiments of cyclists and squadrons of motor-cars hurrying out into the country. There is nothing Sabbatarian about the character or the object of these flying multitudes ; they are frankly bent upon enjoyment. The result is seen in dwindling Church-attendances, a subject about which the clergy are lamenting with ever-growing frequency. Thus the Day of Rest has for its competitor among our Christian brethren, not the claims of business—the competitor familiar to us Jews—but the need, or fancied need, of recreation. Sunday is not observed, not because people want to work, but because they have no inclination to rest.

The foe of Sunday-observance has in recent times become the enemy of Saturday-observance also. The Jewish Sabbath now finds itself between two fires. To the old obstacle—the business-difficulty—there is nowadays added the new one—the restlessness which drives

people away from home on the smallest pretext. Many Jews, who need not, and do not, work on the Sabbath, still do not observe it because they are taken with the fashionable craze for the week-end holiday. I fully admit that it is possible to keep the Sabbath just as well in the country as in town. You can get rest there, as you can get it here. You can commune with God through Nature no less than through the medium of prayerful worship. But we know well enough that, as a rule, the theory does not work out satisfactorily in practice. The 'week-ender,' whether Jew or Gentile, seldom rests, seldom communes even with Nature, seldom worships. He simply enjoy himself—or thinks he does.

And therefore, old-fashioned though it may seem, I venture to affirm that the only environment in which the Sabbath has any chance of flourishing is that afforded by the House of Prayer and the home. For the Sabbath is something more than territory fenced in from the workaday life ; it is something more even than an opportunity for rest. It is essentially a day on which the intellect and the soul are to come by their own. Significant is the twice-repeated command in the old Law—the old Law which is ever new—'Ye shall keep my Sabbaths, and reverence my Sanctuary,'[1]—and the word 'Sanctuary' may be under-

[1] Leviticus xix. 30 ; xxvi. 2.

stood in the widest sense. It is possible to 'keep' the Sabbath, and yet to violate it. The only right way of observing it lies in reverencing the holy things of God—in listening for the call of conscience, in satisfying the needs of the spirit, in a word in devoting the day to the higher activities which the toilsome week almost inevitably crowds out. And this truth our Prophet, I doubt not, is thinking of when he calls those blessed who keep the Sabbath from profaning it. He must be thinking of something better than the merely negative observance of God's day that consists in abstinence from work. The Sabbath must do much more for us than ensure this abstinence, it must do more for us than give us an opportunity for recreation, if it is rightly to be called a blessing. For the springs of blessing in every man are in his soul, and only when the Sabbath quickens the life of the soul does it truly bless those who observe it.

You will notice, moreover, that the Prophet classes Sabbath-observance with fidelity to the moral law. The blessed man is he who 'keepeth the Sabbath from profaning it,' but who also 'keepeth his hand from doing any evil.' And, a few verses later, in his picture of a goodly band of strangers coming and joining themselves to the God of Israel 'to minister unto Him and to love the name of the Lord,' the Prophet uses

the self-same language and describes them as keeping the Sabbath from profaning it. What is the secret of this vast importance which the Scriptural teachers ascribe to God's holy day ? Why does the Sabbath deserve to take rank with the high things of morality ? Why should its observance be one of the essentials of religion even for the stranger ? Is not the answer to be found in the fact that the Sabbath is a precious guarantee of the spiritual life ? Let it be duly observed, and the founts of personal religion are replenished. The one opportunity that men have, amid the cares and preoccupations of the week, to get into touch with the Unseen, is preserved for them. And with our spiritual fortunes the fate of the character is intimately bound up. You cannot get into communion with God, though it be but on one day in the seven, without having your outlook upon life enlarged, without having desire purified, without having your conception of duty chastened and exalted. And what is this but to have the sources of conduct purged and ennobled ?

The spiritual value of the Sabbath is brought home to us by another consideration. If you read a little further on in the Book of Isaiah, you will come to the famous fifty-eighth chapter, which is familiar to you as the lesson appointed for the morning of the Day of Atonement. There we find the Prophet again speaking of the Sab-

bath, but this time of the ideal Sabbath. And he describes it as a day which men honour by forgoing their own ways, their own pleasure, their own words. For one of the most precious characteristics of the Sabbath is its power to move the heart to self-sacrifice. Of his own free will the Sabbath observer renounces for the time being the things of the world, interrupts his hunt after wealth, his pursuit of pleasure—all for the sake of the higher claim. Can you fail to see how valuable is the bracing effect which such voluntary renunciation exercises upon the character generally ?[1]

And yet in these days, when materialism threatens to dominate the entire man, the Sabbath, the great antidote to the evil, suffers increasing neglect. Truly we may cry, 'Oh the pity of it!' The Sabbath-breaker knows not what he does—knows not what hurt he is inflicting upon himself and upon his children with him, what real joys he is sacrificing for the sake of illusory delights. Is there any remedy for this grievous mischief ? I can think of none save a revival of the religious sentiment. Only spiritual feeling can avail to discern and to value spiritual blessings. Other expedients are useless. Such ideas as the substitution of Sunday for Saturday as the day of worship for Jews are

[1] See C. G. Montefiore: *Bible for Home Reading*, Vol. I, p. 86.

certain to fail because they deal with the symptoms of the malady rather than with the malady itself. When Sunday is losing its holy character for Christendom, is it likely to be regarded as a sacred day by Jews ? But the matter is no longer in the realm of conjecture. For many years past attempts have been made in the United States to transfer the Jewish Sabbath more or less formally to the first day of the week ; but without success. The Sunday Service movement is confessedly a failure in all but a very few instances ; and even in those instances all that has been accomplished is the attraction of large congregations, plentifully seasoned with Gentile inquirers, to public worship. Even the most pronounced Reformers among the American Jews refuse to keep Sunday holy, and so they live without a Sabbath. Impressed by these facts, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, which includes some of the most advanced thinkers among the American Jewish ministry, resolved last summer [1] to turn its attention to the task of reviving the observance of the seventh day both in the home and in the place of business. It was a wise resolution. For no change of day will save the Sabbath ; it will be saved only by a change in men's mental perspective, in their interpretation of duty,

[1] In 1905.

in their definition of happiness, in the relative importance they assign to the things of the world and of the spirit.

Do you ask why I sing the praises of the Sabbath to you who are obviously Sabbatarians ? I answer that since my words cannot reach the Sabbath-breaker directly, I must trust to their reaching him through you. And further, I answer that my homily is meant for you also. It is spoken in the hope that it may strengthen some possibly wavering hearts among you, and keep them from surrendering any part of their reverence for one of the most precious of God's gifts to men. From your own experience you can say that the text is true, that they who keep the Sabbath from profaning it are blessed indeed. You know the joy of it, the bliss of it. Surely you will not cast that experience to the winds. You will be sufficiently self-loving to deny yourselves for the sake of the satisfying and the ennobling delights which the Sabbath offers to all who honour it.

WHICH IS THE BEST RELIGION?

(TO YOUNG PEOPLE)

'Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live.' AMOS v. 14.

THESE words, addressed by the Prophet to the individual conscience, may figuratively be regarded as a call to every body of religionists jealous for the triumph of their creed. The one and only justification of their religious opinions is that which is furnished by their lives. That religion will live the longest, and so prove its superiority, which most surely ennobles its adherents. Let them seek good, then, and not evil, if they would live, if their creed is to become the religion of the world.

It is a seasonable truth. To-morrow Christendom will celebrate the birthday of its Founder. There was a time when Jews greeted the anniversary with chastened feelings. It came to find their tables spread with designedly simple fare, an intentional contrast to the good cheer with which their Christian neighbours hailed

its advent. In some cases the austerity which they deemed appropriate to the season was more pronounced still. Among the list of voluntary Jewish Fasts kept in the Middle Ages is one assigned to the ninth of the present month, Tebeth. The reason for observing it was kept a secret. But there is authority for believing that it was observed in view of Christmas, which very often fell on that Hebrew date.

We who live in happier times are fain to greet the season in a different temper. Instead of ostentatiously dissociating ourselves from our neighbours' rejoicing, we would rather sympathize with it. But, in spite of this, we shall not throw a stone at the Jew of bygone days for his seeming churlishness. He knew from personal experience what religious persecution meant ; and was it wonderful that for the sorrows heaped upon him by Christendom he should hold Christianity responsible ? Was it wrong of him to do so ? It is hard to say. But it was very natural. The Russian Jew, in our own time, who finds the great festivals of the Church singled out as occasions for perpetrating upon him, robbery and murderous outrage, is not likely to regard quite as a boon and a blessing the religious system in whose name these atrocities are perpetrated. He is in no mood to draw a fine distinction between the religion and its reputed followers, and to exonerate the one

while blaming the other. Nor if—which Heaven forbid !—we ourselves were to suffer in like manner, should we be more lenient or more discriminating. If we English Jews can regard the great Christian festival with calmer gaze, and even share some of the gladness that it brings to our Gentile fellow-citizens, it is because our lines have fallen in pleasant places, and we are able to look at the matter in a spirit of detachment. Because we have no rankling memory of personal wrong to warp our judgment, we are able to discern in Christianity the depository of a great measure of truth, and to recognize it as a force that has made for the moral and spiritual uplifting of the world. Because we enjoy English justice we can be just to England's religion.

There is nothing novel in such an attitude. It has distinguished many of our great teachers of a bygone day, even though they lived in less happy conditions than ours. Maimonides' description of Christianity and Islam as providential agents designed to prepare the way for the Divine kingdom on earth, is well known. But other and less distinguished authorities taught the same liberal doctrine. The Founder of Christianity, said Jacob Emden two hundred years ago, conferred a twofold benefit upon mankind : he proclaimed the authority of the Law of Moses, and he rescued the pagan world

from idolatry and won it for the moral life.[1] Of still earlier Rabbis it is related that they were accustomed to send gifts to their Gentile friends on Christian festivals; 'for,' they said, 'they are not heathens, but believers.'

This view of Christianity recurs again and again in the history of Jewish thought throughout the centuries. But there is this notable circumstance connected with it. With these liberal opinions there was united an unflinching loyalty to the religion in which those who uttered them were born. They were faithful to Judaism while they were just to Christianity. It was this fact that gave their liberality all its charm, all its meaning. It came of their strength, not of their weakness. It would have been worthless otherwise. It is easy to be tolerant towards the religion of others when we have but a feeble hold upon our own. Liberality in thought, like liberality in deed, gets all its beauty, all its essential attributes, from the store one sets by one's own possessions.

I would especially commend this truth to your attention. The conditions of modern life, so different from those in which the Jew of a past generation was brought up, bring you, my young friends, into close contact with

[1] For the references of these and similar utterances see Hamburger's *Real Encyclopädie*, Supplement II, Art. 'Christen.'

the followers of other religions. What ought to be your attitude towards those religions ? It should be, I need hardly say, one of respect, but of respect that goes with, and is rooted in, implicit reverence for your own Judaism. Let your companions know that you are staunch Jews, penetrated by the sublimity of your ancient creed, impressed by the nobility of your people's heroic witness to God through the ages, and they will welcome and value the respect you pay to Christianity. Show yourselves indifferent to your religion, but complaisant to theirs—show yourselves benevolent towards Christian worship while neglecting the duties imposed upon you by your own faith—applaud others for being Christians while you are half ashamed to own that you are Jews—and, though you think you will be hailed as broad-minded, you will only be despised as weaklings. Remember that there is only one source from which true religious toleration can spring ; it is the religious spirit. We see the good in other creeds just because we are able to see the greater good in our own.

And this is the essence of the whole matter. The right temper is not that which says, ' All religions are equally good, therefore I will respect my neighbour's religion.' All religions are not equally good. All alike contain the truth ; for they all embody the God-idea.

But where they differ is in the mode in which they present that truth, in the various ways in which they set forth the nature of God and the mutual relations which exist between Him and men. It is these various modes of presentation that give to religions their different degrees of value, and that justify us in saying that one is better than another. Thus Christianity declares, for example, that God once took the shape of a man and lived as a man on this earth ; Judaism denies it. Some persons are inclined to say, 'What can it matter what we believe about such things ?' I answer it matters a great deal, first because it is our duty to get the truth for its own sake, secondly because what we believe about such matters has a tremendous effect upon conduct and character. If it be true—to keep to our example—that God has lived a man's life, then He is not the all perfect, the august Being, we Jews believe Him to be, and it is impossible to worship Him with that lowly reverence, that utter submission, which we are exhorted to offer Him. Again, Christianity teaches that God will accept only those who believe in its especial teachings ; Judaism declares that He accepts all good men whatever their creed. If Christianity is right, then how unjust God must be, seeing that He punishes people for the unbelief they cannot help. And if God is so unjust, how can I make Him the

ideal by which I shape my moral life ? or how, making Him my ideal, can I be truly fair and righteous ? But if, on the other hand, Judaism is right, if the Supreme judges us by conduct alone—in other words if He is just to all His human creatures—then we have a powerful stimulus urging us to look upon all men as our brethren, seeing that they are all alike the children of God.

All religions, then, are not equally true, and it does matter very much what religion we profess. For religion is not belief only ; it is also and chiefly a life. And, in the long run, it is by the life that it must be judged. For centuries past all religious sects have been shouting in opposition to one another, ' Our religion is the right one.' The dispute has never been settled yet ; it is still going on. Some day, no doubt, it will be settled, but only in one way. It will be settled by determining which religion produces the best men and women. The great German dramatist Lessing taught this truth in his *Nathan the Wise*. He taught it by means of the fable of the three rings, and he selected as his mouthpiece Nathan, the Jewish character, in honour of his friend Moses Mendelssohn, the staunch and therefore broadminded Jew. You may like to hear the fable. A man of the East once had a ring set with a priceless gem which had the power of making its owner be-

loved by God and men. He bequeathed it to his favourite son, directing that it should be handed down under similar circumstances through succeeding generations, and that its possessor should be recognized as the head of the family. One of his descendants, who inherited the ring, happened to have three sons, to whom he was equally attached, and to each of whom, at different times, he promised the coveted heirloom. But when he was near his end he bethought himself of what he had done, and of the difficulty he had created. Which of his children ought to have the ring ? To escape from his dilemma he had two other rings made so exactly like the original that no one could distinguish them, and he left a ring to each of his three sons. He died, and then the brothers began to contend among themselves. Each claimed to have the true gem. They took their quarrel to the judge. Long did he ponder the difficulty, but in vain. At last he admitted that he had failed. 'I cannot decide between you,' he said ; ' it is the ring only that can decide. The true gem, you say, has the power of making its possessor beloved by God and men. Strive, then, each of you, after the worthy life, and he who excels in meekness, in obedience, in rectitude, will prove himself to be the owner of the true ring.'

Judaism, Christianity, Islam, the three great religions of the civilized world, all claim to be

the one true faith. And in a measure all three are in the right. There is good in each of them. But which is the best, which is most free from the imperfections due to human agency—that is the question still at issue. And it can be settled only by the religions themselves, by the effect they variously exert upon the lives of those who follow them. If, then, we Jews would make good our contention that our religion is the best, that we possess the true gem, we must prove it by the goodness with which our religion inspires us. We believe that ours is the best religion, and that so at last it will be universally acclaimed. But it is for each of us, by the nobility of his life, to hasten that recognition and to share the merit of having produced it. There must be many a boy and girl who longs to see Judaism vindicated, to have its sublimity admitted by the world. Those who feel this longing have the true Jewish spirit; for they yearn for the success of Israel's mission. But that success is intimately bound up with their own moral excellence, their own moral victories. Humanly speaking the cause is in their hands. Let us live as Jews, and Judaism will triumph. For what is the Jewish life but the attempt to translate into action all that is best in ourselves—humility, purity, righteousness, love—and to exercise those virtues in the name of the God of Israel. Seek such a life, and the truth of Judaism

will shine forth as the day. Do good, not evil, and your religion will live—live in the hearts of others besides yourselves—live when many a false or faulty thought about God has been rejected and forgotten.

THE STATUTES OF THE NATIONS

I

'After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do; and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do; neither shall ye walk in their statutes.' LEVITICUS xviii. 3.

THE prohibition in the text was designed to save the Israelites not only from idolatrous worship, but from something even worse, from the immorality that idolatrous worship inevitably brought with it. In later ages, when both the Egyptian and the Canaanite had long passed away, the Rabbins not only upheld the prohibition, but widened its application. Emphasizing its original intent, they used it to enforce the weighty truth that purity of life is one of the cherished ideals of Judaism, as it should be one of the distinctive attributes of the Jew. But they went further still, and made the text their warrant for forbidding a whole category of practices, not because they were morally reprehensible, but simply because they happened to be in vogue among the surrounding

peoples. The term *Chukath Hagoy*, 'the custom of the Gentiles,' even to this day, is, for the ultra-orthodox Jew, a sufficient condemnation of usages which, to the ordinary mind, seem altogether venial and harmless.

But while we recognize a certain arbitrariness in the point of view adopted by the Rabbins on this subject, we must be on our guard against misjudging them. Not all their amplifications of the scope of the Scriptural precept are to be set down to mere prejudice. When they made it a text for warnings against certain degrading superstitions which were rife in their time, we cannot deny that they were doing a valuable service both to the cause of Judaism and of true religion generally. And the twentieth-century teacher might do worse than follow their example, and use the prohibition before us in order to point a homily on the superstitious ideas which nowadays do duty for religion with many a mind steeped in the scientific spirit of the age. Nor even when the Rabbins found in the text-passage their authority for a denunciation of the theatre and the arena should we hastily leap to the conclusion that they were narrow-minded fanatics. We have only to remember what these places of entertainment were among the Romans in the Talmudic period, how grossly they pandered to the worse instincts of

the crowd, in order to justify the denunciation. And in so saying I am not speaking at random. One of the latest authorities on the social life of the ancient Romans—Dr. Samuel Dill—expressly tells us that the theatre and the circus were, for five centuries, 'the great corrupters of the Roman world.' But, he says, in spite of the thunders of the Church 'these schools of cruelty and of vice' retained all their old fascination far into the fifth century.[1] With the debasing effects of these institutions actually before their eyes, can we wonder that the authorities of the Synagogue joined with the heads of the Church in cautioning the faithful against these fruitful sources of moral danger.

But we are in the presence of something more than a merely historical question. The text is still a living utterance. Imitativeness is a Jewish characteristic; and if it justifies the warning of the ancient Law-giver, it affords ample ground for emphasizing that warning afresh in these days. We are just as prone to be influenced by our surroundings as were our fathers who copied only too readily the unwholesome example of their Canaanite neighbours. I am far from saying that this imitativeness is to be deprecated in every case. It has had,

[1] *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire*, p. 117.

and is still having, good consequences for the Jewish character and the Jewish life. Not one word ought we to urge against it as a principle. If there is any good thing among the customs, the modes of thought, the moral qualities of our neighbours, that we do not already possess, we are not only right—we are bound—to try and acquire it. 'Accept the truth, whoever says it,' is the fine saying of the great Jewish teacher Maimonides; and we may put the broadest interpretation upon the maxim and apply it not only to the true, but to the beautiful, to everything that lends amenity to life or graciousness to character; we may apply it to refinement, to culture, to goodness, even though it is the Gentile to whom we go for it. Significant it is, in view of the prohibition in the text, that the Prophet Ezekiel, who has drunk deep of the spirit of Leviticus, should threaten his people with the Divine punishment because they have *not* followed the ordinances of the nations round about them![1] The narrow temper which moves some of our brethren, nurtured in an atmosphere of oppression, with all its attendant evils, to resist the impact of their environment in a new land of freedom even in matters that have no bearing upon the religious life, cannot be too severely condemned. The sooner we Jews throw off all senseless exclusiveness and

[1] Ezek. v. 7.

respond generously to the civilizing forces that are at work around us, the better it will be for the Jew and for Judaism. There must be no such things as a Jewish social type, a Jewish style of dress, Jewish modes of speech, unless such terms are to be revolutionized in meaning, and come to denote a sobriety of demeanour, a purity of speech in every sense of the phrase, and a general simplicity of life, which may fitly set the fashion to the larger community among whom we dwell.

But there is no need to insist upon this point. It is rather the opposite truth which requires to be accentuated. We modern Jews—Jews, I mean, imbued with the modern spirit—are sufficiently impressed with the merits of assimilation. The danger is that we may carry our admiration of them too far, and in our desire to discard what is undesirable and superfluous in our Jewishness, throw away what is essential. How to steer the safe middle course between a cramping separatism and an excessive imitativeness is the great problem for the earnest-minded Jew of the present day.

Take, for example, the question of education. We send our boys to great public schools not only, or perhaps mainly, for the knowledge they will acquire, but for the effects which public school life will exert upon their character and bearing. We want them, we say, to be English

gentlemen. We want them to have some feeling for culture, but to be manly too—courageous, straightforward and independent. We want to have the 'Ghetto bend' taken out of them, the last remnant of Jewish angularities rubbed off. It is a good and praiseworthy idea. But are we quite sure that we do not sometimes pay too big a price for it? There is such a thing, to use a homely expression, as emptying out the child with the bath. We make our boys English gentlemen, let us hope; but do we always succeed in keeping them Jews? There are people, I am aware, who do not mind very much if they fail in this respect. 'It is a pity,' they say; 'but it cannot be helped.' But with such persons I have no common ground of argument. The Jewish preacher necessarily assumes that he is speaking to genuine Jews, for whom Judaism is the first consideration, just as Christianity is the first consideration for the genuine Christian. And if, as the result of our laudable desire to make our children share in the best fruits of English social and intellectual life, we rob them of their religious patrimony, we are doing them, and with them the cause of Israel, not a service, but a distinct disservice. I do not say that English public-school training is necessarily incompatible with a survival, or even a deepening, of the Jewish sentiment. That the two

can exist healthily side by side is attested by many living examples. But everything depends upon the details. A boy may be sent to school under conditions that destroy his Judaism, or again under conditions that make school a place for bringing into play, and so of strengthening, his attachment to it. It is in determining those conditions, in holding the balance fairly between the claims of modern life and his duty to his religion, that the Jewish parent has to exercise his greatest responsibility. What anxious thought does it not demand from him!

But education is only one example among many. Assimilation is a good thing—in reason. But it is possible to make it a fetish, to which we sacrifice not only the interests of Judaism, but also certain elementary excellences which should be the object of common desire for Jew and Gentile alike. Are we not in this respect something like our ancestors of olden days who, with fatal facility, took up with new forms of worship just because they were new, and bowed before strange gods just because they were strange? Is not imitation often a mere slavish conformity, a worship of fashion not because it is good, but simply because it *is* fashion? There are Jews who break with Jewish observance at the mere bidding of general usage, who neglect Passover, for example, in order the better, in the secular sense, to observe Easter,

and pride themselves upon their strength of mind in so doing. To the clear-eyed observer —the Gentile not excluded—every such act betokens not strength, but pitiful weakness. It shows a want of power to stand up in behalf of sacred things against the stress of worldly custom. I refer to such want of moral backbone now, not to accuse you of it, but to warn you against it. The future of Judaism hinges upon this matter. 'The cry of the assimilationist, "Go out into the world,"' declares a writer [1] in the current number of the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, will have to be reversed. '"Go back to Judaism" will be the watchword of the twentieth-century Jew. Or, if we combine the two, we may say, "Go out into the world, but come back a better Jew."' [2] The significance of the utterance lies in the fact that the writer is both a scholar and a prominent representative of the Reform movement in the United States, where the peril of modern Judaism, weakened by the decay of the Jewish life, has already begun to excite the fears even of the most advanced thinkers.

Nor, as I have said, is the question a religious one only. It has its moral side also. The statutes of the nations, implicitly condemned by the text, are the unwritten laws of modern

[1] Prof. Max L. Margolis.

[2] *Jewish Quarterly Review*, vol. xvii., p. 540.

practice that sanction or condone infractions of the higher law of righteousness. One example is the constructive violation of the eighth Commandment: 'Thou shalt not steal.' Constructive, I say. I am not thinking of the crime of the forger or the pick-pocket. What I have in my mind is a class of offences which parliaments do not proscribe nor courts of justice punish, but which are none the less sternly reprobated by the old Mosaic law, with its triple injunction, 'Ye shall not steal, neither shall ye deal falsely, nor lie one to another' [1]—an injunction which puts false dealing and untruthful speech in their proper moral place by including them in the same category with overt and literal robbery. With such injunctions before him, no one, for whom the Bible is the word of God or the echo of his higher conscience, can commit any of the acts I have suggested—from the 'rigging' or 'cornering' of a market to the scamping of one's work, from the framing of a deceptive advertisement to the utterance of trade-lies across the counter, from betraying one's principal, by taking an unfair commission, to idling away the time of one's employer—without knowing himself for a sinner.

But to the Jew these prohibitions come home

[1] Levit. xix. 11.

with double force. For the Bible is in a peculiar sense his code of duty, and to him, moreover, the statutes of the nations are forbidden both by the Pentateuchal Law and by the traditions of centuries. For the faithful Israelite the slightest truck or traffic with dishonesty has been an abomination always. What was said of the spoil of a renegade city has been true of the booty that is filched from a confiding world by unscrupulous methods :—'There shall not cleave to thy hand aught of the accursed thing.'[1] The Rabbins could caution their hearers against what they styled 'the fine dust of slander,' meaning by the phrase the hints and innuendoes which, superficially innocuous, yet contain the virus of actual defamation. And they could imagine much the same thing in dishonesty and deceit. They warned the business-man against sins of omission or commission which are none the less dishonourable because they seem petty and unimportant. They enjoin the trader, for example, to keep his scales well dusted lest, however innocently, he give false weight.[2] Would that the warning might be widely interpreted nowadays and widely heeded! How many people, besides those who deal in commodities, need to be more vigilant in dusting their scales!

[1] Deut. xiii. 17. [2] B. Bathra, 88a.

The evil-doing to which I am alluding is especially dangerous because it is hardly recognized as evil-doing. It is sanctioned by the statutes of the nations—by widespread custom, by general opinion—and that becomes its all-sufficient justification. 'Every one does it,' we say; 'why should not I? Why be better than one's neighbour? This is a practical age, and there is no room nowadays for impossible moral standards, for highflown ideals. How am I to live if I don't meet my competitors with their own weapons?' This is the reasoning, more or less avowed, that is commonly used. It is specious, but it is false. The law of God brands it as false. 'Ye shall not walk in the statutes of the nations; but My statutes shall ye keep—My statutes which, if a man do, he shall live by them.'[1] Not the lower law of convention, but God's law of truth and honour—that you must follow 'in the scorn of consequence.' Not worldly wellbeing, not the full purse or the joys of sense, but the higher, the true life—this must be your aim and your dearest prize.

[1] Levit. xviii. 5.

THE STATUTES OF THE NATIONS

II

'After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do; and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do; neither shall ye walk in their statutes.' LEVITICUS xviii. 3.

AMONG the evil statutes of the nations is the unwritten law that permits an excessive and a ruinous self-indulgence. It is a law which is only too widely obeyed. Here we are face to face with the great disease of the age. Simplicity of life is what all morality calls us to, and especially the morality in which so large a part of Judaism expresses itself. For centuries to be a Jew was to adopt a sane and sober standard of living, to pitch worldly desire low, to be temperate in its indulgence, to recognize the limits imposed by one's social station, and to adjust one's habits and expenditure in accordance with them. It was to have the blessings of contentment and humility, and the safety that goes with the homely virtue of paying one's way. The medieval moralists are untiring in their praise of these lowly excellences. Pur-

suit of them adorned the old Ghetto life and, in spite of its defects, transfigured it. Do we not remember, too, how severely the Prophets of old—Isaiah chief among them—castigated the enervating luxury of their day, and the servile worship paid to the goddess of fashion, the materialism of the men absorbed in amassing wealth and multiplying horses and chariots, the follies of the women, with their perfume boxes and amulets, their mantles and shawls and satchels, their mirrors and turbans and veils.[1] To-day the same evils leap to the eyes; but where is the Prophet to denounce them in the name of God? To invoke that august authority in such a case would savour of exaggeration and unreality; so fast is the grip of the lower law, the statutes of the nations!

To every one the warning of the text, thus interpreted, comes home; but to the Jew most forcibly of all. To us the self-denying life was preached in the childhood of the world. 'Keep My statutes, which if a man do, he shall live by them.' The higher life—that alone is life. We Jews cannot disregard this truth without an especially great culpability. This malady of the age—this excessive love of pleasure, this extravagance and wastefulness, this straining after the mode of life of those above us in the

[1] Isaiah ii. 7; iii. 16 *seq.*

social order—from this we have to do our utmost to save ourselves. Alas! it would seem as if the malady affected us most of all. It is just these sins which are characterized by our enemies as Jewish sins. Is not our alleged tendency to them one of the roots of anti-Semitism?

Expediency, then, joins with the more sacred claim of the Divine law to put us on our guard. If there is one section of mankind to whom the lesson I am enforcing is addressed, it is the Jews whose interests, both temporal and moral, are jeopardized by excessive worldliness and undue self-seeking. And what of our boasted mission? Does not conduct, as well as theology, count for much in the instruction we are to give to mankind? And how shall we win others for the higher life if we be not lowly and unsordid and self-denying ourselves?

And let me not, in saying this, be thought to advocate an excessive renunciation. It is possible to make a good lesson ineffective by over-emphasizing it. The first Puritans who indulged in the luxury of a carpet were thought by their stricter companions to have lost their chance of Heaven! Judaism does not favour such extremes. We are not asked to forswear the world in our flight from worldliness, nor the joy of living in our avoidance of selfish pleasure. We need not make our lives drab

because we shun garish colours. To do so would equally be revolt against the Jewish spirit. What we are asked to do is to find the safe middle course which gives play to our natural desire for happiness while respecting the sanctities of the moral law.

This is the problem which we have to solve as members of the great human family, just as the reconciliation of Jewish duty with the demands of modern social environment is the task that is set us as Jews. Upon its right solution depends the safety of the social edifice. The one danger confronting society in these times is the discontent of the poor, too long put off with mere palliatives for their misery. A return to a simpler life is the obvious step towards diminishing that danger. All inordinate luxury is something denied to poverty ; all needless self-indulgence is so much indifference shown to the appeal of God's stricken and suffering children. For their sake, then, if for no other reason, society must mend its ways and its doings. But we Jews must be the pioneers in this most desirable reformation. For we are warned against walking in the statutes of the nations, against the sordid and selfish rules which hinder life from attaining its full stature, its rightful beauty. But human misery also puts forth its claim—human misery, the relief of which has, from the days of Sinai,

ever been one of the most cherished duties and ideals of the Jewish heart.

And thus another lesson suggests itself. The increasing disfavour into which the simple life has fallen in these days has inevitably intensified the desire for wealth, the indispensable means of lower self-gratification. Luxurious living is necessarily expensive living. And so wealth has become, perhaps more than ever, the criterion of value, the essential condition of happiness and wellbeing.

Now, in dealing with this matter let us preserve a sane and sober attitude. Wholesale denunciations of cupidity and the materialistic temper not only defeat their own object by their seeming unreality, but are clearly one-sided and unfair. I have said before from this place, and I repeat it now, that the pursuit of wealth is not only defensible but even commendable. It is at once a necessary condition of the world's progress and a valuable builder of character. It is the parent of enterprise and discovery. It often calls out in the individual such sterling virtues as industry, sincerity and self-restraint. It may be, in short, a moral discipline. But, on the other hand, if these benefits are not to be neutralized, it must be engaged in for the sake of something better than the material prizes at which it aims. It must be carried on for moral ends, and under a

deep sense of ethical responsibility. The higher welfare of the individual, the good of the race, the promotion of philanthropy—these are legitimate and laudable objects to set before one's self in the acquisition of wealth.

It is here that the modern temper is seen to be signally defective. Money, instead of being the stepping-stone to higher things, is made an end in itself. It is the one standard by which men measure their own happiness and gauge the worth of others. And so results that deterioration of character, that lowering of the tone of the everyday life, which is so noticeable in these times. The consequent evils are not only moral, but physical. The Law-giver, in a sombre passage,[1] speaks of the earth, exhausted by the people's greed, enjoying in the period of their exile the Sabbatical rest so long denied it. The picture is true even to-day. How often does the modern man break down in body or in mind under the strain of money-getting, even as the modern woman of fashion pays in ill-health for the feverish hunt after frivolous pleasures! And only then, in that time of physical collapse, does outraged nature come by its own. Nay, closer still is the parallel. In the absorbing pursuit of riches the Sabbath, with all its wholesome influence upon the religious life, is persistently set aside. But at last

[1] Levit. xxvi. 34.

there comes a series of enforced Sabbaths, the fruit of woe, not of joy, an observance rendered under the stress of compulsion, not in a noble willingness.

But these cases are exceptional and, for the most part, lie outside the pale of our ordinary experience. What I am more concerned to emphasize is the moral loss of those who give to money an undue place in their scheme of life. The narrow outlook, the sordid standards of value, that go with the covetous temper are bad in themselves. Any real ethical excellence, any just conception of life's purpose, cannot coexist with them. But, added to this, there is the loss of the specific virtue and the peculiar joy of self-denial. For what is finer in itself, as well as more beneficent in its results, than the generosity which consecrates one's possessions to the relief of human misery? To be rich, and yet to resist the thousand temptations which riches hold out to the self-indulgent temper, to have the means of enjoyment, and yet deliberately to put them aside, not in a miserly or ascetic spirit, but with the loving desire to redress in some measure the inequalities of human fortune—what can possibly be nobler, more instinct with dignity, more befiting our character as children of God, responsible to Him for the use we make of our possessions and our lives?

Money, then, may be a sanctifier of life ; it may equally be its corrupter. It becomes this when, instead of bringing its possessor into closer contact with the misery of the world, it isolates him from it in a narrow selfishness. One especial example of its sinister influence I must single out for notice. We are all at one in lamenting the gambling spirit that is undermining our social health. What wretchedness does it not bring to the guilty and innocent alike ! What pitiful shifts and devices does it not lead to ! In business we know that it is eating out the heart of honesty ; in society it is dethroning innocent pastimes for unwholesome—even morally unwholesome—amusements. I forbear to say more. I touch upon the topic, and pass on.

Further, among the statutes of the nations against which we may see a warning in the text is the unwritten law that sanctions cruelty. ' What,' you will cry, ' cruelty in these humanitarian days ! If there is one iniquity that public opinion will not tolerate, it is this.' The objection is at once true and false. Most forms of cruelty are taboo to-day ; but there are others—those, more particularly, which minister to personal comfort and pleasure —which too often escape the lash. There are fashions—fashions, I regret to say, upheld

by woman, the sex that nature meant to be compassionate—which inevitably involve suffering for animals or human beings. One thinks of the feathers plucked from harmless and beautiful birds, under circumstances which cause them exquisite suffering, in order to adorn and please the human wearer. Can that be beauty which is rooted in wrong ? Can that be pleasure which is bought with a fellow-creature's pain ? Then there is the craze for buying cheaply, which seems to become more pronounced every day. Have you ever thought of the mischief for which it is responsible, of the workers, sweated and enfeebled, nay, exposed to worse evils still ? And then again there is the more direct cruelty that is connoted by the word ' Sport,' so awful in its grim irony. An animal hunted to death, or crawling away to die in slow agony—this is Sport. And it is permitted and applauded in the twentieth century !

Is it not time that men dragged out these old Levitical precepts from the lumber-room to which they have been ignorantly and disdainfully consigned, and used them as a protest against the statutes of the nations that sanction such enormities ? To us Jews those precepts call with especial force. For compassion is one of our most elementary duties, and ages ago our Law took the brute-beast under its all-

embracing protection,[1] anticipating the modern warning, 'Never to mix our pleasure or our pride with anguish of the meanest thing that feels.'

One more instance before I close. In the first of these sermons I mentioned that among the Rabbinic enlargements of the scope of the text is a warning against the theatre and the arena, rightly chosen as types of the demoralizing influences that were undermining Roman society in the Talmudic age. To-day our places of amusement have been purified. But the wholesome work has even yet not been fully done. The theatre—and I use the term in its widest sense—still ministers occasionally to vulgarity and to something even more objectionable. Art and literature, too, in some of their contemporary manifestations, need further cleansing. And by what power is this to be achieved, if not by public opinion, which you and I can help to form by seeing that our own opinions are sound, and by taking care to express them? Let each do what he knows to be right, and right will be done collectively. Let every man and woman resolve to shun the entertainment, the novel, the picture, that offends against moral canons, and they will have aided the building of a new and a better

[1] See, e.g., Exod. xx. 10; xxiii. 12; Levit. xxii. 28; Deut. xxii. 6, 10; xxv. 4.

order of things by adding their stone to the edifice. But again, as before, upon us Jews the duty falls with peculiar force. The iniquitous statutes of the nations primarily denoted every custom that was inconsistent with purity of thought and of life; and that ancient significance is still unexhausted. For purity, for holiness, Israel has ever stood both in theory and in practice. And to uphold that ideal now is at once to be true to our historic mission, and to render an inestimable service to the cause of latter-day morality.

ANTI-SEMITISM AND JEWISH DUTY

'Ye shall be guiltless towards the Lord and towards Israel.' NUMBERS xxxii. 22.

THUS in olden days was a section of Israel reminded that it owed a duty to the whole of Israel. It was bound to uphold the ancestral religion; it was bound, moreover, to stand by the race. It was to be 'guiltless towards the Lord,' but 'towards Israel' too. The lesson is emphatically one for our own day. We live in times of peril and anxiety. The tragic story of Alfred Dreyfus, the anti-Semitic outrages in Russia, the revival of the blood accusation, are symptoms which no Jew who loves his people can ignore. The persecuting mania, which gave a bad pre-eminence to the Middle Ages, has broken out afresh, to shed disgrace on the opening days of the twentieth century. Nor is the phenomenon one which we English Jews have to regard only from afar. Mr. Arnold White's recent work, *The Modern Jew*, is but too well calculated to fan the expiring embers of anti-Jewish feeling in the minds of Englishmen. Ostensibly, perhaps sin-

cerely, aiming at impartiality, it yet resolves itself into a serious indictment of the Jewish race, which may easily convert wavering minds into confirmed enemies of Israel. This is not the occasion for examining either Mr. White's charges or his nostrums. It is of no use to defend the Jew to a Jewish audience. If I mention this latest critic of ours, it is in order to show you that this plague of anti-Semitism has come nearer home than some of us might think. And I wish you to see this, from a desire to awaken not your fears or your indignation, but your sense of responsibility. If anti-Jewish feeling were absolutely extinct in this country, we should still be bound to do our utmost to prevent its resuscitation. But since it is not dead, and there are influences at work tending to rouse it into vigorous life, the obligation is intensified. Moreover, do we not owe a duty to our brethren in less favoured countries, who are liable to be plundered, and assaulted, and done to death in Russian dungeons, or elsewhere, for the good of their country—the duty of so living as to prove that this widespread hatred of our race is naught but a savage frenzy, the offspring of the evil passions of those who have fallen a prey to it? Upon us, as upon our fathers of ancient times, the solemn obligation is laid of making a self-denying effort for the welfare of our race. We have to be true to

God, faithful to the religion He has given us to be the rule of our lives and the light of the world. But we have also to stand by our brethren in their time of peril, to do all that in us lies to defeat the hostile forces that are arrayed against them. We must be 'guiltless towards the Lord,' but also 'towards Israel.'

What, then, is our duty at such a crisis? To me, it seems, to consist in a careful revision of our personal conduct. Nothing, I freely admit, that the Jew can do, short of putting an end to his own existence, will ever stop this anti-Semitic fury. The real remedy lies far ahead in the remote future. It will come with the disappearance of religious animosity, with the triumph of humane feeling, with the universal recognition of the transcendent tie of brotherhood that binds all men together. The causes of the world's hostility towards us are beyond our control; all we can do is to remove some of the pretexts for it, The Jew-hater prefers against us certain charges to justify his enmity. They may be frivolous; they may even be false. Our duty is to make our conduct of life a practical demonstration of their utter absurdity. We may have, in consequence, to impose severe restrictions upon our just liberty, to consider forbidden not a little that is permissible. But to these sacrifices we must cheerfully submit for Israel's sake.

And if this is Jewish duty stated in general terms, what is the specific duty of us English Jews ? First, I think, we have to strive more strenuously after simplicity of life. That the rich Jew is ostentatious and overbearing is an assertion that forms part of the stock-in-trade of every anti-Semite. Personally, I do not believe that, as a rule, those Jews whose conduct lends colour to the accusation, who load themselves with jewels in and out of season, who make themselves unpleasantly conspicuous at social gatherings, who choose Sundays for their noisiest entertainments, who seem bent on monopolizing the best that this material world affords, intend to flaunt their prosperity in the faces of their neighbours, or to hurt their feelings in the slightest degree. All that they are really guilty of is want of good taste and want of thought. But the results are unfortunate, nevertheless. The world credits these people with the baser motive, and the whole race suffers. Only by studied simplicity of life shall we acquit ourselves of our responsibility in this respect. To have wealth is no crime ; the only crime is to use it badly. And the Jew does make a bad use of it when he gives plausibility to the cry that his race is ostentatious and arrogant.

We are charged further with materialism, with being devoid of all ideals, save such as are

sordid. We live, it is said, only for money and for what money can purchase. To this charge, likewise, we must give serious heed. The *tu quoque* argument will not avail us. It is useless to urge that, as regards love of money, the Jew is no worse than the Gentile. He must be better, or anti-Semitism, which lives on half-truths, will never want for specious arguments. 'Plain living'—that, as I have said, should be one of our aims; 'high thinking' should be another. I rejoice at the thought that among English Jews there is a goodly number of cultured men and women, who, while not shunning material possessions and pleasures, know how to subordinate them to the higher delights of the intellect. But the number must be very largely increased if the Jew-hater is to be exposed to the world in all his naked malevolence.

Another sin which is laid at the door of the Jew is vulgarity. He is loud, it is said, not only in speech, but in dress and in manner. Whether the charge be true or false, let us treat it as true, and go out of our way to cultivate a scrupulously quiet demeanour. Let it be a deliberate policy with us to 'go softly all our years.' Especially let us show increased enthusiasm for the refining influences of education, as distinguished from its material advantages. Let us value it, less as the passport to worldly success than as the magic force that lends true

grace and beauty to life. Ah, what a different attitude would the world adopt towards us if we were to set greater store by these higher possessions! Then we might be rich without offence, powerful without creating envy; for our wealth and our power would be justified by our excellences. Think of the recognized leaders of our community. They unite with an exalted worldly station and with great influence, public as well as private, true refinement of mind and manner, and as a consequence they enjoy the unalterable esteem of their non-Jewish neighbours. Could anti-Semitism possibly flourish in any country where all the Jews or the majority of them, consciously modelled their lives on such a pattern? They might not produce a perfect copy, but the very attempt to produce it would be enough.

I have referred to education. Suffer me to say a few words more on the subject. Equally as important, in relation to anti-Semitism, as the behaviour of Jewish men and women, is the training which they give their children. Our sons and daughters must be imbued, of course, with an admiration for the highest ideals, with a love of knowledge for its own sake, with a devotion to culture, with a contempt for all that is mean, and vulgar, and sordid. But there is more to be said. What occupations are you going to choose for your boys? This

is no light matter, judged from the standpoint of Jewish interests. Why are Jews charged with materialism? Is it not largely owing to their predilection for finance, and the occupations connected with it? That we Jews should adopt the heroic remedy, and unanimously resolve to forswear such callings, is, no doubt, impossible. Let it not be forgotten, too, that these occupations are of the greatest value for the business community, and that the Jews, as leaders of finance, when they have been true to the old Levitical ideals of uprightness, have conferred solid benefits upon the world. But in future would it not be well, in order to prevent misunderstanding, if these occupations were more often left to the Gentile, just as for centuries we left the trade of the money-lender to the Gentile clergy?[1] We have been forced into them by conditions which were not of our making. But now that those conditions have passed away, now that the whole industrial domain is open to the Jew in countries like this, ought we not to withhold our children from vocations which they cannot pursue without doing harm to the Jewish cause? The ancient Rabbins[2] declared it to be the parent's duty to teach his son a handicraft as a means of living. The spirit of the saying deserves wider respect than it usually receives. Why should not the sons even of wealthy parents be trained, if not to do manual labour them-

[1] See Guedemann: *Culturgeschichte der Juden*, I. 129 *seq.*

[2] Kiddushin, 29a.

selves, at any rate to associate themselves, as owners of factories, with such labour when done by others? Then there is the question of agriculture, once the characteristic industry of our people. Well has an old Jewish teacher said that God promised the Israelites fertility of the soil in order that they might not be compelled to seek their bread in the artificial and enervating atmosphere of cities. It is a fine saying. Why should not our lads, those of them, at any rate, whose livelihood is already assured, be trained for the agricultural life? What a magnificent thing it would be if they were to settle on the land as farmers, and so help, at one and the same time, to remove a reproach from the Jewish name, and to restore to English agriculture some of its waning prosperity!

Finally, there is one duty which no preacher can possibly omit from his list of palliatives for the anti-Semitic evil. It is religious stedfastness. The one effectual way of being 'guiltless towards Israel' is being 'guiltless towards the Lord.' The most plausible grounds for hostility towards the Jew are furnished by his religious indifference. Those who are false to their faith, it is argued, cannot be true in anything; they cannot be loyal citizens, or staunch friends, or honest men of business. And this is the one argument of anti-Semitism that we may accept as true. Therefore, I say, let us be better Jews, if we would take a better place in

the opinion of the world. Form your own conception of Judaism; be Orthodox or Reformer as you will; but having formed your conception, live up to it, faithfully and consistently. The weak-kneed Jew, the Jew who plays fast and loose with his religion, who hides it when he can, and apologizes for it when he cannot, is rightly despised by the Gentiles, and the whole race has wrongfully to pay, in distrust and contumely, the penalty of his wrongdoing. But, at the same time, let us have a care that we do not fall into the trap that the professional Jew-baiter would lay for us. We are told—Mr. Arnold White echoes the cry—that we hold ourselves aloof from our neighbours in a narrow religiosity, that the most we deserve is a contemptuous toleration as long as we refuse to eat the food and to marry the daughters of our Christian neighbours. This charge, at any rate, we may scornfully dismiss from our minds. We are not going to commit religious suicide because our enemies recommend it to us as our only possible salvation. If we are to perish, it shall be after the manner of the Jewish martyrs of old—with the Law in our hands, and its words in our hearts. If we are to perish, it shall be, not as traitors, but as faithful servants of the God of Israel. But, indeed, for loyal Jewry there is no death.

> . . . Nought shall make us rue,
> If Israel to himself do rest but true.

THE JEW AND FORGIVENESS

'And he answered, Thou shalt not smite them; wouldst thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master.' 2 KINGS vi. 22.

AT the bidding of the Prophet the King of Israel not only spares the Syrian enemies who are at his mercy, but gives them to eat and to drink, and sends them home. Not by accident, surely, does the story end as it does. 'The bands of Syria,' we read, 'came no more into the land of Israel.' For clemency is never sterile. It turns foe into friend. To the most relentless, the most uncouth nature, it imparts some of its own graciousness.

The lessons of the text are worth treasuring. Forgiveness is one of the rarest of virtues, partly because the self-abnegation it demands is unusually difficult, partly because it is deemed so impossible as to be almost superhuman. Heine speaks somewhere of the confidence with which the Jew, on the Day of Atonement, asks God to pardon his sins. He is certain of being

forgiven, for to forgive, he holds, is God's *metier*, what He exists for. And that is how many people, Jew and Gentile alike, look upon the matter. To pardon is God's business, they think, not man's. For human beings it has no actuality. It represents a moral height to which we creatures of flesh and blood cannot hope—can hardly be expected—to soar. And yet if that imitation of God, which is one of the finest incentives known to Jewish ethics, is something more than a mere figure of speech, it behoves us all to aspire after this sublime excellence. How much better a place this world would be if we did so, if we were less keen to take offence, less intent upon righting our wrongs, more set upon returning good for evil! We ourselves would be nobler; and that nobility of ours would be our best revenge, for it would help to convert to gentler and juster ways the man who has injured us. In a fine passage in *Cymbeline* Shakspeare makes one of his characters speak these words to the adversary he has at his mercy:—

> The power that I have over you is to spare you;
> The malice toward you is to forgive you.

And all forgiveness has this magic power. It places your enemy at your feet, disarmed, vanquished. It is with this idea in his mind that the writer in the Book of Proverbs tells us, in

language which has often been misunderstood and therefore decried, 'If thine enemy be hungry give him bread to eat, and if he be thirsty give him water to drink; for thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head.' [1] Those coals of fire are no unworthy incentive. We take the noblest and also the most effective revenge when we compel the adversary to bow before our magnanimity, partly in shame, partly in admiration, and so win him, in his turn, for kindness and forbearance.

The most effective revenge do I say? it is the only effective revenge. For to requite evil with evil is always vain. What do we gain by it? We satisfy a low instinct—the instinct that bids the animal turn upon its assailant—and that is all. But for the rest we achieve nothing. You cannot stamp out wickedness by retaliation; you only add to it—add to it by your own violence, your own hot passions as well as by the increased bitterness you arouse in your foe. 'For,' as we have been told, 'never in this world does hatred cease by hatred; it ceases by love.' Let that prevail, and the Kingdom of Heaven is assuredly not far off.

And to bring that Kingdom nearer is our supreme duty. What we have chiefly to labour for as the great end of life is to make the world a

[1] Proverbs xxv. 22.

little better and happier than it is. All else is subsidiary—our culture, our charity-giving, our piety, even our worship. For what is the good of praying if the effort ceases with prayer itself, if all we get out of it is spiritual emotion or even spiritual uplifting, if our communion with God fails to inspire us to work more strenuously for the greater wellbeing of mankind? More than this, how shall we pray for the Divine forgiveness, the one boon that we need most, if there be no forgiveness in our hearts for our fellow-men? Surely that attribute, with all the lowliness and humility it implies, is the first condition of successful worship. So, at least, our great teachers held. The Talmud [1] tells how once, in a time of drought, a great Rabbi went into the synagogue and prayed for rain. Entreaty after entreaty he offered, but the heavens remained fast shut up. Then Akiba approached the Ark and uttered one simple supplication; and at once the rain fell. And then to the wondering crowd a voice fell from Heaven, saying, 'Akiba's prayer has succeeded, not because he is the greater Rabbi, but because he has a forgiving heart.'

In this fine legend and in the story which has given us our text we have typical illustrations of Jewish teaching on this subject. They

[1] Taanith, 25b.

could be multiplied almost indefinitely. 'Thou shalt not avenge nor bear a grudge:'[1] 'Help thine enemy in his hour of need'[2]—so the Pentateuch enjoins. David, a rough warrior, spares Saul, his arch-enemy, who has hunted him down[3]; on another occasion, when appeal is made to his better nature, he forgoes his revenge upon Nabal.[4] 'Forgive thy neighbour the hurt that he hath done thee, and then thy sins shall be pardoned when thou prayest'[5]—so says Ben Sira. And the gracious doctrine has sunk, in the course of ages, into the heart of the Israelite, and helped to fashion his most distinctive virtues. Some of the Jews banished from Spain in the fifteenth century found refuge in Africa. A little later a party of Spanish Christians, shipwrecked on that coast, are made prisoners and offered for sale as slaves in the market-place of Fez. They ask to be sold to Jewish masters, 'for,' they say, 'the Jews have kind hearts.'[6] It is a memorable incident, but it is only one of history's proverbial repetitions. For turn to your Bibles, and you will read in the First Book of Kings how the Syrian monarch, beaten in the fight, is advised by his servants to throw himself upon the generosity of his Israelitish

[1] Levit. xix. 18. [2] Exod. xxiii. 4, 5.
[3] 1 Sam. xxiv 4, 5; xxvi. 9. [4] ibid. xxv. 33.
[5] Ecclus. xxviii. 2.
[6] Graetz: *Geschichte der Juden*, viii. 379.

foe. 'Let us put sackcloth on our loins,' they urge, 'and go out to the King of Israel, peradventure he will save thy life. For we have heard that the Kings of the House of Israel are merciful Kings.' [1]

And yet, in spite of such facts, Christian writers—Professor Dalman [2] notably among them—can declare that Judaism 'has been unable to establish Love as the controlling principle of ethical conduct.' What but Love, I ask, is the motive of the maxims and the practices I have cited? What but Love inspires the twofold utterance, which constitutes the very quintessence of our religion, 'Thou shalt love the Lord Thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might,' [3] and 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' [4] Have these words any meaning or have they not? If they have, then Dalman stands clearly condemned as a libeller of Israel.

I say of Israel, for the question is one not only of doctrine but of practice. Not content with depreciating Jewish teaching, Dalman does not hesitate to disparage the Jewish character. Judaism, he alleges, 'possesses nothing corresponding to Christian efforts for saving the lost; nor can it,' he adds, 'possess anything of

[1] Kings xx. 31.
[2] *Christianity and Judaism* (Eng. ed.), p. 45.
[3] Deut. vi. 5. [4] Levit. xix. 18.

the kind, because it is deficient in the principle of Love.' It shows itself 'harsh,' he declares, 'towards the fallen, the sinner, the unbeliever.' With the examples I have already quoted it would be passing strange if this were true, seeing that if the Jew has known how to bless his enemies, he must surely have mastered the far easier duty of leniency towards the sinner who has done him no personal wrong. And he *has* mastered it. The tenderness of the Founder of Christianity towards his fallen sisters has its counterpart in the story of the Rabbins—those men so freely stigmatized as hard and unloving. A woman, who has led a life of shame, goes to a Sage and asks to be received as a Jewess. He refuses. She goes to another, to that man of saintly character, Joshua, son of Chananyah, and he consents at once. 'What,' cry his amazed disciples, 'you would receive such a woman as this?' 'Yes,' answers the Master; 'for has she not repented?'[1] Match this utterance against the famous saying,[2] admittedly of doubtful authenticity, 'Let him that is without sin throw the first stone,' and you will find it hard to discover which is the nobler.

Those who disparage Judaism on such grounds think doubtless of the parable of the Prodigal Son, with the forgiving father ready to take him

[1] Midrash Rabbah to Eccles. i. 8. [2] John viii. 7

back with open arms. A Jewish father, they imply, would thrust him away. But is this true? Think of the erring son or daughter creeping back in shame and contrition to the old home, and try to form a picture of the stern figure on the doorstep, waving the lost one back. Who is that figure—the typical Jew, forgiving to his enemies, carrying indulgence to his children to a fault, or the austere Calvinist, bred in the very heart of Christianity? The father who takes back the prodigal, the teacher bending in compassion to the tearful Magdalen—these pictures bite deep into the imagination. 'You cannot,' we are assured, 'find their like in Judaism.' But what, save Judaism, produced these types of compassionate forbearance? If the Galilean carpenter, untravelled, unlettered, did not derive his pity from the religion on which he was fed and nourished, where else did he get it? Or are we to say, with our Christian brethren, that he was the one teacher—the one Prophet if you will—in all history who was the product of a miracle, and not of his environment?

Judaism, says Dalman, has nothing like the Christian efforts for saving the lost. It is quite true; but the statement is a vindication of Judaism, not a condemnation of it. It is true, not because of any lack of feeling in the Jewish heart for the lost, but because, for long centuries,

the lost have never existed as a class in Israel. It is only in modern times that, under the stress of the social battle, the one virtue most dearly prized by the Jewish woman has parted with some of its peculiar sanctity ; and so there have been forced upon the community activities which hitherto, to its honour be it said, have been superfluous.

We Jews need not be ashamed of our compassionate record. 'Smite them not,' the Prophet cries, and the Jew has brought within the scope of that merciful command not only his enemies, but 'the fallen, the sinner and the unbeliever.' For all of them he has had words and deeds that heal and bless ; but he has not prided himself upon them, saying, 'This is Jewish charity ; behold, how superior Judaism is ! ' Among the objects of his forbearance are the religious susceptibilities of other men, the sacred ideas and practices cherished by his brethren of alien creeds, who are striving no less earnestly than he to serve the common Father. And this, let us hope, will be the Jewish temper always. We will readily pay homage to the nobility of other religions, not seeking to depreciate them in order to exalt our own religion. But we will none the less stedfastly keep our faith in the excellence of our old Jewish teachings and ideas, which have never been surpassed, because to surpass them is impossible.

HISTORIC JUDAISM

(PASSOVER)

'And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy children for ever.' EXODUS xii. 24.

I HAVE read that Renan, the great theologian, once paid a visit to Bernez, the Jewish rationalist, and found him keeping the Passover with the utmost scrupulosity. Renan expressed his astonishment that a man who had renounced the creed of Judaism should still engage in tho practice of its observances; but Bernez justified himself. Theology, he said, divides; but ceremonial unites, for it feeds our racial consciousness, preserves our *esprit de corps*. Thus I strike the keynote of this sermon.

Once more the circling year has brought us to the Passover, and by God's grace wo are permitted to celebrate its time-honoured rites. With fervent hearts may we offer our gratitude to our Heavenly Father who

in the words of our Prayer-Book, 'has kept us alive, and sustained us, and led us once more to this glad season.' Yet not for His gift of life only shall we thank Him, but for a life that numbers among its incidents this ancient observance, with all its wondrous power to stir our finest sensibilities. For just as this mystic Springtide comes to rouse sleeping Nature with its gentle touch, so the very footfall of the Paschal season awakes many a drowsy heart. Those of us who during half the livelong year have seemed to wear their Judaism lightly, pay sudden homage to the solemnity of their religious heritage. For it is these historic observances which, as Bernez acutely said, are the great unifying influence in Israel. We may differ in our conception of Judaism; our creed may be narrow or broad, vague or clear-cut; but we are all at one in acknowledging the sway of such a Feast as this. The first Passover united our fathers and made them a people. Every succeeding Passover has achieved the same magic task down to this very day!

Here, then, is the strength of Judaism; and it is well that we should face the fact, and reckon with it. Our creed is immortal as is the Divine Being whose truth it mirrors. But that Judaism is among the voices that publish it is due to the fostering influence, to the mighty inspiration, of our historic ceremonial. The Unity of God

is a thrilling battle-cry ; but that there is an Israel to rally to it is the work of the Passover and its kindred observances. Judaism as mere Theism, as a bundle of theological propositions only, is but a dream. It is Theism and something more—that Jewish consciousness which defies analysis, which survives when the tie of creed is broken, that mystic stir of the blood which binds the coldest heart among us fast to Israel—to Israel, dead, living and to come. Deprive Judaism of this vital ingredient—reduce it to a mere theology—and you slay it. And yet, so elusive is its nature, creed must go to the making of it. For the Jew must needs believe in the future of his people and in the God who is slowly weaving its destinies in the loom of Time. Some of us may imagine that they have freed themselves from the shackles of dogma, but every one who keeps the Passover makes at least this confession of faith.

And wonderful it is to think of all Israel united to-day by the bond of this ancient observance. It is a spectacle unique in the history of Religion. Our Christian brethren are commemorating this week events that took place 1900 years ago. But impressive, from this point of view, as Easter is, Passover is more imposing still. Nearly twice nineteen centuries separate us from the Redemption of our

fathers ; and to-day it moves us to a fervour of which even many a past age could not boast. The voices of a long-dead world call to us by a subtle telegraphy across the vast gulf of time, and we hear and answer. Could there be a more signal proof of the continued vitality of Judaism? Does it not show that the heart of Israel is sound, beating high as it does with the sympathies and the hopes that make us Jews ? While this happy condition endures—while the Passover endures—Judaism will live.

Nor is it difficult to explain the sway of such a Feast as this. Its secret is twofold—racial and personal. The great Redemption holds us with its fascination, but only to bid our hearts go out to all the history of our race. This people, ' saved of the Lord with an everlasting salvation '—this people that gave the world Moses and the Prophets and the Saints, that has lived and died for God's truth—this people, we say, is ours. We are the sharers of its glories and its humiliations, the heirs to its divine promise and its sublime ideals. This people, we say moreover, began its life with a protest against wrong. It has lived its life protesting against wrong. And it has done so by moral force alone. Inherently weak, it has been made mighty by its cause, so that ' no weapon formed against it has prospered '—neither persecution nor calumny, neither the sword nor the stake,

neither the world's enticements nor the persuasive arts of an alien priesthood. Powerful nations have tried to destroy it ; but they have perished, while their would-be victim has lived on. We who seemed ' appointed to die ' are the living history of the dead nations ; for their annals are written with pen of iron upon the seared soul of our race. ' This,' we cry, ' is the finger of God.' A people is not thus wondrously preserved to live aimlessly. Still does Israel's ancient protest retain its meaning. Still is God's mighty arm outstretched. ' As in the days of our coming forth out of the land of Egypt God will show us marvellous things.'

Nor does this appeal of our history stand alone. The Festival's own story adds its message to it. How many a time has the Passover been kept in fear and woe ; dread of the Present reproducing the agony of Egypt without its triumph ! Think of the memories linked to the ancient ceremony that made each Jewish household last night a temple of prayer and love. The very bread on the table eloquently told of the long drawn-out anguish of our fathers—anguish thirty-five centuries old, but renewed again and again throughout them all. How often has medieval fanaticism learnt of Egyptian cruelty, and bettered the instruction ! How often has the Jew been robbed of his happiness, of his life, to make of this Paschal season a Christian

holiday! You remember Heine's tragic story. A Rabbi, in the very midst of his joyous celebration of the Seder Service, suddenly espies beneath the table the lifeless body of a child. Two guests, profiting by the hospitality freely offered to strangers on the Passover, have placed it there in order to support the most hideous of calumnies. It is a legend; but that there is only too much truth in it is proved not by medieval history only, but by events of which we ourselves have lately been almost the eye-witnesses.

And yet with the invincible optimism of the Jew we go on hoping for a better day. The clouds only veil the light. These sorrows of Israel—these defeats of humanity—are but for a time. God keeps watch over His own, and His own is mankind, which is to be saved through Israel. The shadows that lie heavily on the prayerful heart are dispelled by the joyous strains of the Hallel, the song of the redeemed that strikes the final note of our home-Service. It voices our gratitude for the mercies vouchsafed to our race 'when Israel went forth out of Egypt, and the house of Jacob from a people of strange tongue,' and it proclaims our undying faith in a yet grander manifestation of the Divine spirit, when God, who 'hath given us light,' shall be seen and acknowledged by all flesh.

Nor is this all. A Feast like this weaves its spell about each heart because it is bound up with each heart's history. Who can keep it without thinking of his dearest, living and dead ? There are those happily spared to us whose hands we still clasp, whose eyes still look lovingly into ours. To these it unites us by the tender and the holy tie of a common worship. There are the beloved, too, afar off, whom it restores to us for a time, or at least links to us in spirit. And there are those whom the Hand that seems so cruel and is so gentle has taken from us, and whom we shall never see again on this earthly shore. See how the Passover gives them back to our embrace in beautiful communion. This prayer, we remind ourselves, we used to say with them ; that blessing they taught us ; that poetic rite they loved to perform, and all the more because we performed it with them. Ah, those sweet, pathetic memories ! How precious they are—precious because the dead live through their magic, more precious still because our fealty to the dead is made to live again. We may forget their doctrine for awhile, be unmindful of it through the careless years. But we cannot wholly forget it, bewholly heedless of it, while these anniversaries have power to speak to us of them. The faith that was theirs shall be ours—ours all the more surely because it was theirs. The loyalty to

Israel that set their souls aflame shall kindle and ennoble our hearts. And so the ancient command fulfils itself from age to age, and the sacred ordinance is for us and for our children for ever.

Think of it, my brethren, and let the thought bind you fast to this Paschal Festival and to all the inspiring ceremonial of which it is the type. Do not let these precious constituents of your religion die. Cherish them for your own sake—for the sake of the noble sympathies they keep alive, for the sake of the ideals they enshrine—ideals that may lift you now and again above the paltry aims that too often make the sum of the daily life. But cherish them too for the sake of your boys and girls ; for is not the ordinance to be ' for thee and thy children ' ? If you would have them live as Jews—take part in the great work to which Israel has been called—then train them to revere these historic rites which, though they are no substitutes for religion, are the strongest bulwarks of it. Nay, do it for your own sake, so that you may be held in loving recollection when you are gone. For with these observances you will leave your children something to remember you by. They will honour and thank you—honour you for the religion offered them in such winning guise, thank you for the incomparable joys it has brought them. For the old miracle will be

wrought once more. The Passover will come and keep the Destroyer from your homes. It will save your little ones for the happiness of the noble life.

THE REVELATION OF THE FLOWERS

(PENTECOST)

'And after the fire a still small voice.' 1 KINGS xix. 12.

IT is a custom at once graceful and appropriate that decks the synagogue with flowers on Pentecost. There could be no apter symbol of the joy that clings to the Feast. It is as though we borrowed some of Nature's smiles and entwined them with our worship! Nor is the bright aspect which the synagogues are wearing to-day in conflict even with the severer side of the Festival, though at first sight it may seem otherwise. The awful portents that ushered in the manifestation at Sinai, the majesty of the Revelation itself—these, we might think, are but ill-represented by emblems that tell of Nature's gentlest and kindest moods. But there is a real harmony lying beneath this superficial discord. If it were possible to keep our Pentecostal celebration in full sight of Nature's grandeur—on some Alpine heights, for example—or if we could assemble once more at the foot

of Sinai itself, the lesson we should learn would only echo the doctrine of these lowly, simple teachers.

Let us think about it a little. Elijah finds his Sinai, as centuries before his fathers had found theirs. Worn out by privation and grief he turns his weary steps to Horeb, and in that spot haunted by holy memories seeks solace and fresh inspiration. He enters a cave in the mountain-side, and then there are wrought anew the wonders that heralded the great Manifestation in still older days—tempest, earthquake, fire. But God is not in any of them. 'And after the fire a still small voice,' which woos the Prophet from his retreat ; and he listens. The convulsions of Nature have only terrified him ; the voice stills his fears, fills him with courage, and he knows it for the voice of God !

And so it is always. The frown on Nature's face affrights us. We follow the track of a desolating storm ; we read of the earth opening its mouth suddenly and of entire populations going down alive into the grave ; we hear of a single battle laying low hundreds of brave men and darkening many a happy home ; or we think of our own individual pain, of the sorrow that seems to have fastened upon our life for ever ; and we fall on our knees in utter dread before the destructive Power that thus discloses itself,

and cry, like Israel of old, 'Let not God speak to us lest we die.' And yet to us also, if we would but listen for it, the same comforting message is borne: 'Fear not.' The earthquake and the storm, the groans of the stricken, the eternal lament of a suffering world, are but the rumblings of God's chariot wheels. They are not the King Himself. If we would discern Him we must strive to catch the 'still small voice' into which all these harsh tones merge themselves as into harmonious music—the still small voice of infinite love that alone wholly expresses the Divine soul. These visitations, seemingly so cruel, are but the garb in which the Heavenly mercies clothe themselves. They are the shadow of the Divine as it moves on its compassionate errand over the earth! By all these stripes men are being healed, and from pain blessing is for ever being distilled by God's wondrous alchemy. Are we not doing well, then, when we surround ourselves with flowers on this Feast of Revelation? They are the true mirrors of God. They show Him to us more faithfully than does Nature's grandeur, for they reveal to us His very heart. The still small voice—that is God, and their whispers are its echoes. Love fulfilling itself in the Father's wholesome correction, beckoning the race and the individual to the sunlit summit by the only way that leads to it, the way of toil and

sorrow-love that will triumph at last, that is for ever triumphing—this is what they preach to us, and this is God.

Love, I say. We enter a beautiful garden ; we revel in its scent, and feast upon its banquet of colour ; and we say ' God is good ; only mercy could have made the earth so fair, could have filled human life so full of blessing.' And truly it is wonderful to think of. Against all the pain of the world let us set the joy, typified—created—by a cluster of roses, and then, if we can, be pessimists, sceptics. Is it for nothing that to our beloved, as he tosses on the bed of sickness, we carry a handful of flowers ? Do we not hope, do we not know, that their splendour will lighten his gloom, their sweet freshness beguile his weariness, their still small voice speak to him a message of hope and comfort and peace ? And dare we say that God is less good than we, that He never meant all this beauty as a pledge of His care, that the dumb mouths of the flowers are eloquent of all love save His that made them ?

Do I find love so full in my nature, God's ultimate gift,
That I doubt His own love can compete with it ? . . .
Would I fain in my impotent yearning do all for this man,
And dare doubt He alone shall not help him, who yet alone can ?
Could I wrestle to raise him from sorrow, grow poor to enrich,

To fill up his life, starve my own out, I would—knowing which
I know that my service is perfect. Oh, speak through me now!
Would I suffer for him that I love? So would'st Thou—so wilt Thou!

But love is not all the message. The voice is still and small, and yet it preaches of power, though the sermon comes home to but few. The humble violet that sheds its perfume about our feet, witnessing to the working of God's mind as well as to His beating heart, is not more eloquent of Divine pity than of infinite might and wisdom. Here, then, is a heavenly revelation that rivals Sinai. What in all the wide range of Nature's magnificence, what in all the impressive scroll of the world's history can more clearly disclose God to us, more solemnly proclaim His power, than the tiny flower we trample upon as we go our heedless way? Think of its wondrous parts—stem, pistils, stamen and calyx, and that magic source of its colour and life which men of science only name, but do not explain, when they call it chlorophyll. The materialist claims to have solved nearly all the problems of the universe. But a simple flower baffles him, confutes him. I chip off a piece of stone from a rock, and it lies where it falls. Centuries may come and go, and yet that fragment will never change.

I pluck a flower, and fling it away. It flags, and in an hour is dead. What is the explanation of this huge difference ? No one knows. When we do know we shall have solved the everlasting mystery. For, gazing on life, on the life even of the humblest flower, we ' stand in the presence-chamber of the majesty of the whole earth ' ; we are face to face with that infinite energy which clothes the bare trees with beauty in the Springtime, which extorts the bird's love-song, which keeps the stars in their courses, which draws the thoughts of men ' up to the sovereign seat of the Most High.'

> Flower in the crannied wall,
> I pluck you out of the crannies,
> I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
> Little flower. But if I could understand
> What you are, root and all, and all in all,
> I should know what God and man is.

And so ' the meanest flower that blows can give thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.' ' I saw God in His glory passing near me, and bowed my head in worship '—so the great botanist Linnæus describes his emotions as he looked at an opening blossom. The phenomenon he beheld was familiar enough—familiar to him most of all ; but it never lost its wondrousness. It was always a miracle. And over every sensitive heart these everyday

events in Nature's life-story exert the same mighty sway. The still small voice eloquently proclaims the Divine Majesty. These flowers that are around us now are, it is true, a triumph of human skill and industry. Days, years, of patient toil have produced their beauty of colour and form, their infinite variety. But what is that fragment of time compared with the ages during which the sleepless energy of the Supreme has laboured to make this human success possible. Single out any one of the blossoms upon which your eye rests, and then try to picture its remote ancestor æons ago. It was some wild weed, all but devoid of beauty ; and yet boundless wisdom had already endowed it with potentialities which have ripened at last into all this loveliness. Is it any wonder, then, that we celebrate the manifestation of Sinai by filling the synagogue with flowers ? God has no mightier witnesses. We need not go beyond them to discern the footsteps of the Divine King in the sanctuary of the universe. You know the modern poet's beautiful lines :—

Worn and footsore was the Prophet
When he gained the holy hill ;
'God has left the earth, he murmured ;
Here His presence lingers still.

'God of all the olden prophets,
Wilt Thou speak with man no more ?
Have I not as truly served Thee
As Thy chosen ones of yore ?

'Hear me, Guider of my fathers,
Lo, a humble heart is mine;
By Thy mercy, I beseech Thee
Grant Thy servant but a sign.'

Bowing then his head he listened
For an answer to his prayer;
No loud burst of thunder followed,
Not a murmur of the air.

But the tuft of moss before him
Opened while he waited yet,
And from out the rock's hard bosom
Sprang a tender violet.

'God, I thank Thee,' said the Prophet,
'Hard of heart and blind was I,
Looking to the holy mountain
For the gift of prophecy.

'Still Thou speakest with Thy children
Truly as in eld sublime;
Humbleness and love and patience
Still give empire over time.'

The reproof comes home to us all. We sigh for a token of God's existence, for a proof of His nearness. 'Oh that Thou wouldest rend the Heavens, that Thou wouldest come down'[1] —so we cry. But why 'tempt God by asking a sign,' seeing that we have already tokens innumerable? No need for the heavens to open, seeing that the earth is thickly sown with God's messengers. 'Stars in earth's firmament,' they lift our souls to their brethren in the sky and to Him 'that bringeth out their host by number.'[2] They cast us prostrate before a

[1] Isaiah lxiv. 1. [2] ibid. xl. 26.

might and a mercy that are unlimited. They reveal to us, too, the holy covenant which God has made with all His children—the covenant of obedience to His wise will, of mercy and love to each other that faintly imitate the mercy and the love He shows to us all. And so the ' still small voice ' triumphs as of yore. It entices us in our turn from our retreat—from our doubts and our misgivings and our fears. And going out to the God we have found at last, our hearts confess their belief, their trust, their dutiful submission.

THE PRAYER FOR LIFE

(NEW YEAR)

'Give me understanding, that I may live.'—Psalm cxix. 144.

It is not easy to determine the exact meaning of this brief utterance. Certain it is that the understanding for which the Psalmist prays is not intellectual merely. As is proved by every verse of this, the longest hymn in the Psalter, the supreme desire of the inspired poet is to know God's law, to be taught His will. This, then, is the understanding for which he supplicates in the text. But what significance is to be attached to his final words—what the life is to which this higher enlightenment is to lead him—is by no means clear. He may mean by it nothing more than merely physical existence. Knowledge of the Divine commands may, in his view, be, in the most literal sense, his life and the length of his days. His thoughts may centre in the unquestionable truth that bodily health and wellbeing are the direct and certain consequence of obedience to God's

laws. But it is possible that his prayer may strike a deeper note. The life of which he is thinking may be the spiritual life—the life of lofty aspiration and noble endeavour—and the understanding he asks for the discernment of the means by which he may attain it. If so, what he craves is the most precious of all boons. He would be taught the highest knowledge. He would learn how to live—how to live so that he may fulfil the purpose for which he has been placed on earth, so that his life may be redeemed from failure in the sight of God, the Giver, who alone has the right and the power to judge and appraise it.

Understood in this latter sense, the Psalmist's words have a peculiar significance for us on this great Festival. To-day another year begins, with all its uncertainties, all its immeasurable possibilities. Even if the change of date means nothing for some of us, the solemnity of the Day is hardly lessened. For all of us it is an anniversary, and all anniversaries are laden with impressive memories. With every day that is solemnly considered a new year begins. How natural, then, that from our liturgy this morning there should ring out again and again a passionate cry for life! 'Remember us, and grant us life'—so runs the familiar prayer on this Day of Memorial, and it utters the petition of every heart. That

supplication, at least, compels our fervour—makes us one worshipping congregation.

But it would be idle to pretend that the prayer has the same meaning for all of us. Its purport varies with the suppliant, and the sense in which he utters it is no unfair criterion of his moral condition. There are some for whom the merely physical life represents the ideal boon; and for that, and that alone, they ask. 'Here,' they say to themselves, 'is a whole year gone. I would fain see another year end, and another, and yet another. I would go on living; let me live.' And there the conscious request stops. Others there are on whose lips the prayer is still a prayer for the physical life, but for the physical life warmed with the glow of joy, made opulent with worldly blessings. These are the so-called fortunate. They would live to keep the wealth and the pleasures they have, and see them multiply. But there are others less happy. The past has been unkind; perhaps the future will be kinder. They are poor, and would be rich; they are careworn, and would be at ease; they are struggling, and would be prosperous. And so all of us alike crave for life. It is our one common desire, our one dearest wish. Is the familiar prayer, thus limited in its significance to lower things, worthy of an occasion so solemn? Is it worthy of men and women with

immortal souls ? And can we wonder that the Jew has been accused of setting undue store by this earthly existence, that he has been said to have an exceptional dread of death, and that his liturgy—for these sacred days more particularly—has been charged with encouraging the feeling ? [1]

And yet, in spite of all this, I say let the prayer stand. None could more closely harmonize with the genius of this holy day. Only let us weave into the words a deeper meaning—make them the expression of a nobler longing. For the beginning of a year means the end of a year ; it means the close, for good or for evil, of a chapter in our life-story. So much irrevocably gone from us, leaving us perhaps so little. On a day like this we realize that, in the Psalmist's words, we are being carried away always ' as with a flood,' that, like a torrent leaping down from its home in the mountains, our lives speed on with irresistible, with awful rapidity, and that we are hurried away with them. Now, if ever, we can get the perspective, and see this brief earthly span of ours in its true proportions. This physical life—mere ' breath and the quick flow of blood '—what is it but a shadow, ' the dream of a shadow ' ? A few heart-beats, more or less, a working of our will, an assertion

[1] See Dalman : *Christianity and Judaism* (Eng. ed.), p. 40.

of our personality, as transient, as futile, as a bubble on the waters, a few thrills of sensation, pleasurable or otherwise, something won, something lost, and then the end, and life's poor play is over. Why, then, attach so much importance to it ? Why make it the one object of our endeavours, the one burthen of our prayers ?

But suppose we see life from another standpoint, see it, in Spinoza's phrase, 'under the aspect of eternity,' as an ordinance of the universal Lawgiver, as the training-ground of our imperishable souls. Suppose we understand by life, not years, but the service which is to glorify them ; not a space in which to do our own pleasure, but God's ; not an opportunity merely for heaping up riches or getting enjoyment, but for transfiguring these activities into the means of self-ennoblement. Suppose, when we pray for life, we pray for it in this higher sense—pray for the goodly life which will realize a divine ideal, fulfil a divine purpose. Then surely we shall be offering a becoming prayer at this season, one which befits its solemnity, one which befits us as children of God. A new year is born to-day ; how shall we worthily greet its advent save with the Psalmist's supplication, 'Give me understanding, that I may live' ? This is our supreme need—the illumination that will enable us to distinguish

between the true and the false life, that will help us to begin to live at last, even though it be at the eleventh hour. Let us pray for this knowledge, and then we can afford, not to ignore lower boons altogether, but to leave them in the background. Riches, comfort, enjoyment—these things we shall not fail to strive for ; the desire and the pursuit of them are part of human nature, the essential condition of human progress. What we have to seek after, what we have to pray for, is the insight and the strength that will transform them into the materials of our true happiness, make them the instruments of our moral uplifting.

And so let us go on praying the old prayer. ' Give me life, O God,' let us cry, ' the life of obedience, of self-mastery, the life lived under a sense of its insignificance, and yet of its potential greatness, chastened by the thought of its brevity, gladdened by the conviction that it is the avenue to the Highest. Teach me how to attain this earthly bliss. Give me understanding that I may live—live in the world, but in the world "made better by my presence"—live among men and for them, but always with Thee and for Thee.' Thus understood, our chief prayer on this Festival is a prayer eminently characteristic of our religion. For Judaism, as a distinguished Jewish writer [1] has well said,

[1] Guedemann : *Das Judenthum*, p. 56.

has revealed to men not Heaven only, but earth. It is unique among the religions in the stress it lays upon the value, the nobility, of this worldly existence. It comforts us with the hope of immortality, as the balm for bruised hearts, as the promise of reunion with the beloved we have lost awhile. But it would have us chiefly fix our thoughts upon our service of God ; and for that service this life is the one opportunity that we are certain of. And so we are taught to pray for life—for life, indeed, as the path to the life everlasting, but for life, above all, as our great sphere of work, our great means of self-discipline, the builder of character, the fountain of holiness. Heaven is above us ; but at our feet are the steps by which we may climb to it—the days and the years which we are to sanctify by the self-denial which is the truest self-realization.

Let this thought be with us to-day. Behind us is the old year ; before us, all unknown, lies the new. Of both let us think. If the one is dark and sad, if sombre memories meet us as we look back upon the vanished days—memories of sorrow or moral failure—let us pluck strength and solace from them, with which to tread the future calmly and safely. Let us ' rise on the stepping-stones of our dead selves to higher things.' From moral failure let us gather strength to sin no more ; from sorrow let us

distil trust and hope and peace. And as we turn and look forward, let it be with hope and courage. Our work calls to us—let us do it, only in a larger, a nobler temper than before. Life calls to us—let us go to meet it with all the old energy, all the old zest, but with new and holier resolves. Let us use it, and leave all else to the wisdom and goodness of Him with whom all His children are safe. This is how Judaism would have us feel. It is the true science of living—the science which keeps us brave and strong under difficulty and trial, and which teaches us how to reconcile the claims of this passing world with the imperious demands of the eternal God.

A PLEA FOR PERSONAL RELIGION

(NEILAH)

'If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the Lord, unto Me shalt thou return.'—JEREMIAH iv. 1.

A THOROUGH-GOING repentance—such is the idea which the Prophet seems to emphasize in these words. Contrition, to be real, must be wholehearted—not sincere merely, for that is self-evident, but entire. It must take in not bits of our characters, but the whole of them. It must include not certain sins, but sin, our darling offences as well as those of which we have begun to say 'I have no pleasure in them.' If we would repent to good purpose, we must make a clean sweep of our failings. If we would go back, we must go back all the way —go back to God. For He will be content—our aroused conscience will be content—with nothing less. Penitence, to be worth anything at all, must revolutionize our entire being, change our outlook on life, ennoble our aims, purify our will. In temper, at any rate, it must make us new men and women. And then it will

have done its work. The foundations of the better life will have been laid broad and deep and secure.

This is doubtless the meaning of the Prophet's appeal. But it is susceptible of another interpretation. We may see in it a direct call to the life with God, to the religious life. 'Be not content, O penitents'—so we can imagine the Prophet crying—'be not content with righteousness, but to it add faith and trust and submission, all the elements of the religious temper. Go back to goodness, but go back also to God, the type of goodness, the inspirer of it.' Here surely is a topic which we may well ponder at this solemn moment, at this crisis in the Day's fortunes.

For in yet another sense than that which I have just indicated are we in danger of limiting our efforts after atonement. Yielding full homage to the sacredness of duty, to the beauty of rectitude, we are inclined to set religion in the background of penitential endeavour, and even to ignore it altogether. 'Conduct', we say, 'is the one thing needful. Let my life be in the right, and it will not matter what my religion is, or if I have no religion at all.'

Is this true? That mere creed, mere theology, is a thing of small moment, measured against the transcendent importance of conduct, I readily admit. Judaism admits it to the full. But

theology is one thing, religion is another. God Himself—so the Jew is taught to think—makes no difference between men on the score of their creed. He judges them by their lives, by the relation that their acts bear to their conception of righteousness. When He makes up His great account it will not be what they have thought about Him, but how they have served Him—with what fidelity, with what sincerity, they have given themselves to the good He personifies—that will be the sole criterion of their deserts.

But religion is a totally different thing. Unlike creed, which is an affair of the intellect, religion is an affair of the heart, the life. It *is* a life. It is the God-idea come to the birth. It is not belief *about* God, but belief *in* Him—living, vitalizing, ennobling belief. It is our consciousness of His existence, of His constant contact with us, of our dependence upon Him, of our duty towards Him, in action, shaping our morality, influencing the details, the very tone of our daily lives.

If this be a true definition of religion, then you will see that, so far from its being an affair of small moment to the moral man, religion is of the most tremendous importance for him. It is important for him in two ways. His conduct and his happiness are both involved. To have faith in the Unseen, to live in conscious

touch with it, is to have the mightiest of all impulses to righteousness. It is to feel that the moral law is the expression of the highest and wisest will of which we can conceive, and that obedience to it is conformity to that will, the harmonizing of our lives with the eternal purpose, with eternal rectitude. It is to feel that in our struggle after the good, in our battle with temptation, we have the sympathy of the Highest, that for every throb of admiration that virtue wins from our hearts, every thrill of pain that the effort after it costs us, there is a corresponding beat of the universal Heart. It is to have a deeper reverence for duty, to have a larger conception of it, to be endowed with added strength in our fight for it.

Moreover, to believe in God is to be happy. It is to live in an elevated and serene atmosphere where the storms of this lower life cannot reach us, and from which what we call evil is seen to fall into its place in the universal order, and to be transformed into good. It is to be fortified against the temptation not only of sin, but of pain—of our own pain or the infinitely greater pain of the world—the temptation to break with morality altogether.

Thus it is that religion is of the first importance for the penitent heart, for the heart that would regain its grasp on the moral life. That it is possible to live for goodness without living

for God, to be righteous without being religious, I will not attempt to deny. You may effectively repent of your misdeeds by asking pardon only of your offended higher selves. Your only shame may spring from the thought of the innate dignity you have lost, the manhood you have besmirched ; and your shame will be a noble one. You will have made your atonement, and your future may indeed prove to be a real, a successful effort after amendment. But, as compared with the religious man, you will be heavily handicapped. You will have to carry on the struggle under difficulties from which he is free. The support and the courage which he gets from his faith you will lack. He has all in his favour that you have—the quickened conscience, self-reverence, veneration for the sacred principle of righteousness. He has all this, but much more. For he knows that he has God on his side, all the tremendous forces of a divinely ordained universe on his side. They fight for him from Heaven ! Where are the angelic helpers you have to match them ?

Thus the cry of the Prophet may well give us pause in this solemn hour. We cannot lightly dismiss the question of the religious life when we are engaged in planning anew the moral life. If our atonement is to be complete, it must reach down to the things of the spirit. My plea, then, is a plea for personal religion, for the

temper that makes holy things familiar and familiar things holy, for the uplifting of the heart in prayer, but also in the pious and dutiful thought of God amid the common acts and incidents of daily experience. In a word, I plead for righteousness, but for righteousness made clearer and surer and stronger by living contact with the God-idea.

Am I asking for too much ? No. I ask not for any special ritual conformity, for any exacting effort of worship, for any costly self-sacrifice. I ask only for a new disposition of the heart—a disposition of the heart which will effectively lift us above the ignoble, the unsatisfying aims which too often content us, above, too, a merely conventional morality. In what manner that disposition is to take shape I leave each of you to determine for himself. For prayer I plead, not for a prayer-book. A few heartfelt words night and morning, if they be nothing more than a simple thanksgiving, or a call for help and guidance, or a cry of submission—these are enough. Nor do I plead the cause of the sacred building in which we are met, so often deserted at other times, beyond asking whether you will not heed its silent appeal now and again on the Sabbaths of the year. But chiefly would I ask for that attitude of mind which the Psalmist calls ' looking up,' that trust in Almighty goodness, that

conviction of Almighty wisdom, that desire to be at one with God in feeling and in act, which constitute the essence of all religion. This is the repentance to which I invite you; for, that attained, all else will follow, the changed moral life will be assured.

Do I seem to make a superfluous demand? I think not. Most freely do I acknowledge that among this congregation there are many for whom religion is a reality, a solace, a joy, and not a few for whom it is that in spite of its not manifesting itself in attendance at public worship or in kindred ways. The soul often guards its treasures jealously, and the finest gold sometimes lies in places inaccessible to human gaze. I will go further and affirm that there is not one of you who is altogether a stranger to the religious life, who has entirely cut himself adrift from God. If I thought otherwise, the idea would be rebuked by this very Day of Atonement, with its wondrous power to wake the drowsy heart with its sublime message. No; religion touches us all. Even those who seem to deny its power confess it. We think that our spiritual sensibilities are dead, and lo! some incident comes and stirs them into being—this Kippur, perhaps, or a chance word spoken in God's House, or some crisis in our experience, an illness, a sorrow, a birth, a death. The germ is in every heart waiting to be quickened. What I

am asking is that we should quicken it of our own free will, and quicken it now.

There are some, perhaps, who will protest that it is impossible. 'My course,' they will urge, 'is set, and I cannot go back. It is too late to be religious.' Well, I will let the plea serve for the moment, and ask only for an indirect compliance. Let your religion, I say, be the attempt to make others religious. There are those whose moral and spiritual destinies are in your hands. There are your children. Keep *them*, at any rate, for God. Let theirs be the prayerful life. Their happiness is your dearest wish. Give them religion, and that wish will be realized. Let them be 'taught of the Lord,' so that 'great may be their peace.'

And as to yourselves, is it quite true that for you any deeper, any more personal religious life is impossible? The germ is not dead, as your presence here abundantly proves. Why should it not grow and expand and burst into flower? 'I am too old to begin again'—how inconsequent the cry is! It is just because we are growing old that we ought to think about beginning again, that the need to face the tremendous issues involved in religion becomes peculiarly imperious. The meaning of life, the coming of death—these high matters stand out ever more sharply to the consciousness as life's day declines and the shadows lengthen.

Things begin to present themselves in new proportions. There is a readjustment of values. This material world, with its pinchbeck prizes, its garish pleasures, is dwarfed in the truer perspective ; and duty, destiny, God, the thoughts we have so long kept in the background as of minor importance, loom large to our vision. Too old for religion ! No ; if we are getting too old for anything, it is for the playthings which have amused us hitherto, the puppets which, after the manner of children, we have fondled and tricked out as though they were realities.

Well is it for us if the realization of this truth does not come too late. We may adhere to our old estimates of good, our narrow conceptions of happiness, pinning our faith to the ' vain ' things ' that cannot profit nor deliver.' But are we wise ? How long will they profit us ? A few more heedless years, another pleasure or two, a little more wealth, a little more ease, a little more tinsel to gild the surface of things, and then the end. Is it worth while ? Ah, no. But whilst not altogether rejecting lower aims, place the higher above them, cherish your years, sanctify them, say to yourselves ' if there is any good thing that I can do, let me do it now, for I may not pass this way again,' and then you will have a harvest to reward all your long toil and travail. You

will have achieved something to be remembered by on earth, to be rejoiced over in heaven. And, when the end comes, it will find you ready ; for the end will be fulfilment.

But the surest way to this joy is through religion. 'If thou wilt return, return unto Me'—so the voice of God is calling to us all. He would have us grasp the hand He stretches out to us—grasp it, not in a passing pardon, but in a recovered and sustained fellowship. Life with Him, life in conscious relation to His might and goodness and love, life lived in submission to His decrees, in gratitude for His blessings, in obedience to His will—to this the Voice summons us. Ah, may we be wise ! May we heed the call—the call of this gracious Day, the one everlasting call of our souls ! Amen.

And do Thou, O merciful Father, come to us in this solemn hour. Reveal Thyself to our dim vision. Help us to see Thee ; help us to feel that Thou art very near to us even when our hearts are far removed from Thee, to know that Thou art lovingly mindful of us even when we forget Thee most. Oh, keep this thought ever in our minds. The day is ending, and soon its spell will be broken. Let us take Thee with us into the worldly life which soon will begin for us anew. In our work may the thought of Thee be a sanctification ; in our sorrow may it

be our solace ; in our weakness may it be our strength. But chiefly do we ask that it may be a bond uniting us to Thee in willing service, that the consciousness of Thy power may cast us in humility at Thy feet, and the knowledge of Thy never-ending mercies turn us to Thee in grateful obedience. And as for the past, do Thou forgive us our trespasses. We are the clay, and Thou art our potter ; but we are all the work of Thy hand. Be not wroth very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity for ever. Save us, we beseech Thee—save us from our unworthy selves—for Thou alone art our hope. Amen.

THE SOUL AND ITS DESTINY

(NEILAH)

'The soul of man is the candle of the Lord.'—PROVERBS xx. 27.

DID the man who first uttered this saying believe in immortality? Surely we must think so. That he believed in the existence of the soul, in a nobler element in man transcending in worth his physical nature, is certain. Equally certain is it that for him the soul was divine both in its life-work and in its origin. It was 'the candle of the Lord,' the 'vital spark of Heavenly flame,' glorifying this poor tenement of clay, while, after the fashion of God, searching out with penetrating ray the secret places of the human heart. But such a belief could not end with itself. It has great implications. The idea of soul must have immortality, in some form, for its corollary. The indwelling spirit, coming from God, partaking of His nature, must be imperishable, as He is. The light set for a time in this earthen lamp of the body must one day be taken back into 'the

fountain of light,' to shine with eternal, perhaps enhanced brilliancy in a clearer atmosphere.

Some such beliefs, however indefinitely formulated, must have filled and solaced the hearts of the ancient Hebrews, the author of our text among them. For us of a far later day those beliefs possess possibly a heightened interest, though I fear a diminished authority. The destiny of the soul, its very existence, are questions of transcendent importance for the modern man who thinks at all. But the very eagerness with which they are discussed is a symptom of a certain weakening of the old faith. If we argue so earnestly about these great truths, it is because they are not, strictly speaking, truths for us any longer, and we would fain get back our old grasp upon them ; we would fain persuade ourselves that they are trustworthy after all. For who does not long to know that the divine is within him, seeing that to know it is to be sure of God ? Where is the bruised heart that does not yearn for the assurance that a compensating Heaven awaits it in the hereafter ?

Always a fit subject for meditation in God's house, it is a topic peculiarly appropriate to this present hour when the gathering shadows of night deepen with mystic touch the solemnity that clings to the whole of Kippur. Moreover, the end of this great day, so big with significance

for our moral destinies, is drawing near. How can we help being reminded of the end of life's yet more fateful day—that end which we must all face sooner or later, the moment when the great opportunity will have passed, the vast enterprise finished well or ill, the final *Neilah*, the final closing of the gates, accomplished ? Truly, it is an appropriate topic, as appropriate as it is solemn. The soul and its destiny—who can be indifferent to it ? Are we children of God, akin in nature to the all-pervading Soul of the universe ? Are we immortal ? Does this consciousness of ours live on and on through vast eternity, impressed and fashioned for weal or for woe by the life we have lived here ? This is our great theme.

An old Scandinavian saying likens man's life to the flight of a bird that enters suddenly in the night at one end of a brightly lighted hall, and swiftly passes out at the other. A brief moment of illumination, of vision, and then it returns to the darkness whence it came. In a measure the image is true. To the outer gaze life seems but a passage from the unknown to the unknown. Whence ? Whither ?—it is the ever-recurring question which all our science is powerless to answer. But the eye of the intellect is not our only organ of perception. There are things unseen of it which are revealed to a subtler sense within us. Deeply rooted in our

common nature are instincts, intuitions—call them what you will—which certify us of truths, disclose to us realms of being and experience, for ever veiled from the lower gaze. We cannot explain those instincts—we can scarcely describe them—but they are real none the less. And one of their messages is immortality. This life is not all. This breathing, feeding animal with which I identify myself, is not I. There is a larger self, a larger life—a self I try to realize, a life I try to live, in my best moments—and that self I shall wholly realize, that life I shall fully live, in the great Beyond. The witness is within us. In the mystic effort of prayer, when we soar above this world into an infinite, a diviner realm, when, yielding to the spell of Nature's grandeur, we are carried away into the presence-chamber of the universe, in our flight on the wings lent us by some sublime strains of music, we 'have sight of that immortal sea which brought us hither.' From darkness to darkness again? No, but a flight from glory to glory, with a far paler splendour between—this is Religion's account of life; this is the soul's account of herself. Cold reason may deny the doctrine and persuade us to abjure it; but still we return to it again and again. The secret voice within us triumphs.

Nor does reason always chide. Sometimes

it adds its witness too. We stand by an open grave and cry, 'This cannot be the end; those exalted thoughts, those noble strivings, that rectitude which uplifted us, that love which blessed us, cannot have perished; surely they are only transplanted—transplanted to bloom the better in a more congenial air. Those aspirations after the good, at best but imperfectly realized, must have an ampler opportunity for fulfilment than this world could offer. They have not died in blossoming. God's purpose cannot be so abortive.' 'There *is* something'—so a mourner, who had just laid his dead in the earth, exclaimed to me the other day—'there *is* something.' And then he fell to discussing immortality. In those words he expressed that vague sense of the soul's life and imperishableness which, ordinary man of the world as he was, even the might of an undimmed sorrow could not subdue in him. Yes, there is something—something in us all which defies analysis, but which compels recognition from us all.

But it is not in the sad moments of experience only that the soul stands revealed to us. In happier moments we see it. Conscience discloses it to us. The hatred of evil, the admiration of goodness, which move even the heart of the depraved, in whom God's likeness seems long ago to have been battered out of recogni-

tion, the existence of goodness, the unquenchable love of a mother for her child, the fight for duty in the teeth of overwhelming odds, the aspiration after God, the very conception of Him—all these are so many tokens of the Divine visitant within us. Or shall we say that they are merely physical phenomena, higher perhaps, but not other in nature, than the processes which sustain the bodily life? Think of the saintly lives that have been lived, the seers that have beheld the sublime vision, the prophets that have preached the truth, the martyrs that have died for it. Were they nothing more than the product of material forces? Was their beauty the same in origin as the comeliness of the flesh? And has the same destiny overtaken it? It is impossible. These energies and potencies are things apart. Playing, like the flame, about the lamp, like the flame they are distinct and nobler. Man has a soul, and it is 'the candle of the Lord.' And because it is of Him, it lives on. We are not like the beasts that perish.

The Soul, Immortality—to trust these great conceptions is to have Religion's choicest benediction. What strength, what comfort, do they not instil into us when we are face to face with life! All the sorrow that burdens us, all the riddles that vex us, disappear before the

illumination they bring, like the mists before the rising sun. What can trouble do to the soul that knows its own imperishableness—that knows itself—knows itself for the very breath and therefore the very proof of God ? There is a Heart, akin to ours, that throbs with us in our griefs, in our longings after the good. There is a life hereafter which shall redress all the inequalities, repair all the seeming injustice, of this life. Nay, more, there is hope for those who have loved and lost, who yearn for 'the touch of a vanished hand and the sound of a voice that is still.' Surely God, the good, the merciful, the just, will not deny them their heart's desire. He will not, because He is Himself, and to Himself must be true. He has put these yearnings into our soul, and He will satisfy them, just as He will fully satisfy hereafter that desire for goodness which He has made a part of our being ; and He will do this because He is God.

So we think, and rightly think. But still more important is it for us at this most solemn hour of the most solemn of days to remember the moral aspects of these great truths. For both the Soul and Eternity are conceptions bearing the most intimate and vital relation to conduct. Our belief in the existence of the soul as the gift of God, our belief in its survival after death, each in turn necessarily affects the

way in which we conceive of life and the manner in which we live it.

And first as to the soul itself. If it comes from God, then with it comes the most solemn of all responsibilities. To the ordinary appeal of the moral law is added the sacred obligation to obey it that lies in the conception of righteousness as loyalty to the indwelling spirit, the fulfilment of our higher selves, the realization of the Divine within us. And so the soul itself, apart from the question of its future destiny, claims us for the best. It is the central thought of all true Religion. And perhaps it was because that thought actuated the great teachers of the Bible that they said so little about immortality. For this life itself is the all-sufficient bond—this life seen as an opportunity for true self-realization, as the exercise-ground for man's noblest capacities.

And this temper may well be ours. 'How shall I give my soul back to God pure as He gave it to me?'—in this wise some of our teachers have suggested man's one duty. In their literal sense the words suggest the impossible. The soul cannot be given back pure to God. Not for the grown man the innocence of the little child. Strive as he may, some soil of the world must cling to him. But in their general and obvious intent, the words are true enough. Children of the world though we are, we can

still make the soul worthy of God's acceptance when He takes it back. For the knowledge of good and evil which comes with the knowledge of life, far from tainting, may uplift. The very battle with temptation endows us with a dignity which innocence can never attain. The rounded outline of a child's face is fair to look upon ; but the brow of age, lined by care and strenuous thought, has a beauty of its own—finer, nobler. And is this not true of the soul also ?

Shall such thoughts find us unmoved ? This soul within us God will one day require at our hands. One day we shall be asked for an account of our spiritual stewardship, of the use to which we have put these godlike powers, these magnificent opportunities. Shall be asked, do I say ? We shall ask the question of ourselves, if we are worth anything at all. For surely the time must come when the moral man looks into his life and cries,' What have I made of it ? ' On his last day, perhaps, or in those earlier moments of insight vouchsafed to us all when the worldly life is put back into its right place in the great plan. How shall we answer that question ?

But to us, whose beliefs carry us the great step onward, who hold that the Heavenly light within is not quenched at death, there comes an added appeal. The hereafter must

bring awakening ; in God's ' light we shall see light.' Everything will be made clear to us that needs to be made clear. The trivial and worthless things upon which we have wasted our days and powers will be seen to be the cheats and the snares they are. We shall see them eye to eye with God. His presence, the Heaven about Him, will make more poignant still the pangs of our self-knowledge. We might have seen with His eyes here ; we might have felt some of the holiness that wraps Him round and round, and woven some of it into our own being. But we would not. We preferred the false light to the true.

It is a solemn thought. But shall it cast us down ? No. Rather shall it uplift us. For there is still time to prepare for the eternal future—still time to trim and feed the Heavenly lamp. Let us use well the years that are left us, and we may face the hereafter with tranquil soul. But that hereafter—those remaining years—is not the fate they hold for us intimately bound up with the fortunes of this present hour ?

THE EXTRA TOUCH

(TABERNACLES)

'Like a booth in a vineyard.'—ISAIAH i. 8.

A FEW days ago I was reading a letter from a traveller in the Lebanon, the region to the north of Palestine. The writer, describing the vineyards in which the district abounds, said that they were dotted with booths or huts, in which men were stationed to keep off the jackals, the 'little foxes' of Solomon's Song which spoil the vineyard. From these huts the watchmen would call to each other from time to time, partly, doubtless, in order to scare away the troublesome animals. A vast gulf separates these rude huts from the tabernacle by the side of the synagogue which we have profusely decorated in honour of the present Festival. And yet the one is the parent, so to speak, of the other. Our festive booth has sprung, by a process of evolution, from the hut occupied by the watchman in the vineyard at this season of the year. Strictly speaking, the tabernacle need not have been made a

thing of beauty. A simple shed of planks and boughs would have sufficed for the purpose assigned to it—sufficed to call up a living picture of the Eastern vintage and the old idyllic life of our fathers, and further to point the truth that man is physically frail as is the tabernacle itself, and, like Israel of old, wandering in the inhospitable wilderness, is utterly cast upon the care and the protection of God. But the Jewish heart has never been satisfied with a merely literal fulfilment of a Scriptural precept. It has made a new obligation for itself, an obligation known as *hiddur mitzvah*, 'the beautifying of the command.' The scroll used for readings of the divine Word should be written on the clearest parchment and clothed in the richest vestments; the Shophar should be ornamented with artistically wrought figures; the festal palm-branch should be of the greenest, and the citron of the most golden. And so, too, the Succah should be no bare shed, but a bower. It should be as beautiful as generous hearts and skilful hands could make it. Something extra, something over and above the actual demands of duty, should be rendered. Love should mingle with service, to complete and transfigure it.

The idea has its moral implications. The old Rabbins were accustomed to hold up to admiration those saintly persons who, going

beyond the mere letter of their contract with conscience, would penetrate to its spirit, and interpret it generously. Such persons were always on the watch to do something extra for God and for men. Thus one Rabbi would make a point of giving a workman more than his just wage. 'I am bound,' said the good man, 'to give him that; my only merit can lie in giving him more.' Now, I am not recommending this particular example for imitation; it might prove just as awkward in practice as the familiar maxim that enjoins a man, when he has been smitten on one cheek, to offer the other to the smiter. It is the temper it betokens upon which I would fix your thoughts. The letter of moral duty killeth no less than the letter of the Scriptures. We may do all that we are commanded, and still fall short of complete obedience. The extra, the little more which is so much—so much because it is given of our own free-will, without any formal command to compel it, because, in a word, it comes of love—that is the element which gives to service its peculiar graciousness, and crowns it with perfection.

'Ah,' you will say, 'how exacting you preachers are! Not content with asking us to do the right thing, you want us to do more. Is not plain duty hard enough? Why add to it by asking us for the impossible?' But that is just what I am not asking for. I am suggest-

ing only something that is strictly within your powers, something which falls within the scope of daily life and opportunity. When the strange wayfarer goes up to Rebekah at the well, and asks her for a sup of water from her pitcher, she answers 'Drink; and I will also draw water for thy camels.' It is a response as fine as it is momentous. All her future, did she but know it, depends upon it; more than this, her character is lying in the balance. But she emerges from the test triumphant, and her triumph is won by the simplest means. What she does is grand, not grandiose.

It is so with all these works of supererogation that I have in view. Fine as they are, every ordinary person can do them. We can all beautify our tabernacle, and invest good deeds with the crowning grace which the mere doing of them will not impart. Think for example of charity-giving. There are those who give their money, and their money only; others who give it, and something more besides, something at once little and much. There are those who give grudgingly; others who give willingly, with a kind word for the poor or for the almost equally unfortunate person who has to beg for the poor. 'Here; take this; but I cannot afford it, and these constant calls are very tiresome'—that is one picture. 'Ah, I wish I could give more; it is good of you to have

asked me '—that is the other. And what a vast chasm there is between them! The same act, the same amount; but in the one case a grudging spirit taking away all the beauty, all the charity of the deed; in the other all its charm and blessedness heightened by the ready way in which it is done, and by the happiness it has communicated to another heart. The difference is the difference between the plain, rudimentary Succah and the Succah made glorious by piety and affection, between the bare *mitzvah*, and the *hiddur mitzvah*.

It is an enormous difference, and yet, after all, only the difference of a hair's breadth. Watch two persons arranging flowers in a vase. One thrusts them in, and leaves them; there they are—stiff, awkward, ugly. The other gives them that dexterous, that nameless touch which sets off all their beauty. It is so with good deeds. One little touch makes them splendid. It is the touch of love; and it glorifies the humblest life. Every day one meets a plain and homely face, without the slightest pretensions to good looks. Yet a smile lights it up, and you say 'how beautiful!' And it is a beauty that lasts, that age can never wither. Even so is it with the homely life. We cannot all do great things, but we can all give to small things the little extra touch that brings them near to greatness. And these little graces never

fail of their effect. I have said that there are two ways of giving charity—there are two ways of doing all good deeds. 'How are you ?' and 'Good bye'—we can say these words mechanically, coldly, freezingly ; we can say them in such a way as to fill with joy the hearts we greet. Some persons never break a single commandment, but still fall short of real goodness. They are content to keep their path straight, and neatly gravelled, and free from weeds. Others would do more, and border it with flowers ! These latter it is who lead the beautiful life—the life that truly blesses others, even as it links them to others in an imperishable bond of affection and gratitude. There are hearts about us pining for sympathy and comfort, and it is just this extra touch that will give it to them. A word of praise and appreciation and encouragement—this is a little thing and costs nothing ; but it goes very far. And yet how few are at the pains to say it ! We hope for it from others, but are chary of bestowing it. 'How helpful it is,' we cry, and there stop, remembering, as people usually do, to apply the doctrine to every one save ourselves. If there is an encouraging word to be said, a heartening handgrasp to be given, a loving smile to be bestowed upon a famishing soul, let it at least come from us. Who knows ? Others may see the gracious act and learn to do likewise.

Well, then, let us beautify our tabernacle. A booth in the vineyard, a frail and homely fabric in the great world of humanity, each life may be made splendid by the simplest means. A little thoughtfulness, a little sympathy, a little love—this is all that is needed. Don't let us think otherwise; or, searching for great opportunities of transforming our lives, we shall miss the familiar ones that are within our grasp. To use the poet's image, we look up to the sky for a revelation of duty, when the violet is breathing its message at our feet.

> The common problem, yours, mine, every one's
> Is, not to fancy what were fair in life,
> Provided it could be, but finding first
> What may be, then how to make it fair
> Up to our means.

The noble, the heroic thing is not to be sought far away in unknown paths, in posts of danger, where the battle rages with unwonted fierceness. It is to be found in the scenes of everyday, humdrum experience, in the home and in the market-place. Let us look there, and we shall find opportunities enough for doing the one thing extra, for giving the final touch, which transforms the bare hut into a fair and fragrant bower.

THE LAWGIVER AND THE LAW

(SOLEMN ASSEMBLY)

'There hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face.'—DEUTERONOMY XXXIV. 10.

THIS afternoon we shall celebrate what is known as 'the Rejoicing of the Law,' which marks the completion of the annual cycle of public readings from the Pentateuch. The text forms part of the last section of Deuteronomy, one of the lessons appointed for the occasion. The recital of that section is immediately followed by the reading of the first chapter of Genesis, in token of our untiring affection for the sacred Word.

It were much to be desired that this service, outwardly so beautiful, in significance so inspiring, might draw larger congregations. For an observance which deepens, while expressing, our attachment to the Pentateuch, which is a tribute moreover to the deathless memory of its chief hero, ought to move us to all the enthusiasm with which it inspired the Israelite of old. For the Law is still ours—ours, too, in trust for

the world, to whose well-being it is for ever ministering. And it would be the greatest of anomalies if its custodians should be heedless of the splendour of their heritage, indifferent to the greatness of the teacher from whose hands they received it.

The occasion, then, is appropriate for a few words about the Master and his work. Let us try to seize the salient features of his character and of the Law that bears his name.

'There hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face.' So runs the text. The words are Moses' epitaph. They sum up his distinctive qualities; they tell the secret of his uniqueness. Never has Israel produced another soul so richly gifted, a soul that, eagle-like, could fly straight to the sun. Yes, the text is an epitaph; it might have been written above the Master's unknown grave. But though no tomb marks his resting-place, he has the finest, the most imperishable monument in his Law. It is wonderful to think of. Here is this book, thousands of years old, which is as fresh to-day as it was when it was first given to the world. To the world, I say; for it is still a world's code. Every day is a new witness to its wisdom and its sublimity—brings new subjects to its yoke. In church, as well as in synagogue, its story and its precepts are

read week by week ; its morality is the good man's rule, its conception of God the aspiring soul's ideal. Truly, like the aged Lawgiver himself, its eye, its insight into the deepest needs of men, is not dim, nor is its natural force, its power over the human mind, abated.

And what is this Book but the self-expression of him whose memory is indissolubly linked to it? 'The Law of Moses' we call it, and the title will always hold good, let criticism do what it may. We are told that it is a composite work, in great part a late work, that it is an amalgam of many documents of various dates and editings. It does not matter. Enough for us that in it are deposited the life-story and the teaching of a majestic soul, whose spirit informs it, even as the Divine Spirit speaks to us through his. 'The Law of Moses is true'—thus rings out the old Jewish cry. And the cry itself is true. For what greater proof could we have of the veracity, the divinity of the Pentateuch than the fact that after centuries of human progress its empire over the world is not merely unshaken, but mightier than ever? No book has drawn to itself such searching investigation. All the sciences have applied their touchstone to it, and it has emerged from the test triumphant, with that spiritual essence of it intact which constitutes its very self, its characteristic gift to mankind.

The Book, I say, is the self-expression of the Master. As it is mighty still, so was he mighty. Power is the keynote of his character. In the church of S. Pietro in Vincoli in Rome stands his statue done by Michel Angelo. Power speaks in every line of the gigantic figure, in the huge limbs, the tense muscles, the flowing beard, the dauntless look of the leonine face. The sculptor has been well inspired. Strength was Moses' chiefest attribute ; the undying sway of his Law proclaims it. Only a man of power could have ensured the survival of his teaching—filled those who came after him in remote generations with his spirit, quelled the hostile forces of his own time, the idolatry of his surroundings, the stubbornness of his people. His was essentially a militant soul. The legend which tells of his conquering and ruling Ethiopia, when a fugitive from Egypt, has thus much truth in it. From first to last his life was battle—battle with ignorance, with superstition, with wickedness, with wrong—battle with himself, with a certain native timidity, with a turbulent temper, with an intelligible indignation begotten of the ingratitude and rebellion of those for whom he spent himself with splendid, with pathetic prodigality. What a sublime figure is that which confronts Pharaoh on his throne, and hurls at him the challenge of the Lord of righteousness ! There, with Aaron, he stands alone, the mouth-

piece of the living God, the champion of the downtrodden slave against the idolatrous autocrat of a colossal empire. He is diffident, retiring. But all his modesty is overborne by a consuming passion for justice. All his self-distrust is swept away as with a flood by his pity for the oppressed, by his zeal for the true God. The man conquers others because he can conquer himself—surrender himself utterly to the call of his soul. And that is true strength.

But there are men—heroes—who thus bow to the noble tempest within them, and yet lack the creative force which alone may rank them with the immortals. They are dominated by sublime passions, and yet leave nothing to the world but their example. Moses was cast in a finer mould. He pulls down Egyptian tyranny, but with constructive genius builds up a code of goodness. He gives a law, and calls a people into life to obey it, and by their obedience to perpetuate and to extend its sway. 'Moses,' says Heine, 'was like the Egyptians among whom he lived; he was an artist who aimed at colossal effects. But, unlike the Egyptians, he built not with stone or brick; his materials were men. He built human pyramids. He took a horde of shepherds and made them into a people—a people that was to defy the centuries. He created Israel.' Nay, he built far better than his prototypes. The pyramids are crumb-

ling; Israel remains. Those ancient monuments tell of a dead civilization, of a creed which time has refuted. Israel still lives, and his message is eternal.

Such was this mighty man of God. And yet, strong as he was, like all great souls he had the strength of gentleness. 'Face to face' did God speak to him, 'as a man speaketh to his friend.'[1] He climbed to the lonely heights of spiritual knowledge, even as he went up alone to the mount; but his heart was lowly as a little child's. 'There hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face'[2]—such is one tribute to his greatness. But there is yet another:—'And the man Moses was very meek, above all other men upon the face of the earth'.[2] They are two aspects of his character; but they are one. Because he was so great he made himself little. Because he saw God he humbled himself. Because he loved his Divine Father he loved his Father's children. Not him, but a worthier must God choose for the great task of delivering Israel; that the gift of propheey has fallen upon others besides himself awakes no jealousy in his heart—'would that all the Lord's people might be prophets[3]'; his own flesh and blood, who ought to know him best,

[1] Exod. xxxiii. 11. [2] Numb. xii. 3.
[3] ibid. xi. 29.

stab him with cruel words, but he makes no sign ; God Himself must speak for him, must espouse the cause he is too meek to plead himself. Well may it be said that this man the Lord knew face to face, for his rare virtues could only have sprung from intimate fellowship with the Highest.

But his example is only part of the legacy he has left us. Even richer is the gift he gave us in his doctrine. The transition from the last to the first chapter of the Pentateuch, which we shall make this afternoon, is psychologically correct. We read of the lawgiver's death only to recall those great truths about God which are set forth in the earliest words of Genesis. The universe evolved from chaos, not by chance, but by the creative spirit of the Most High ; life, even in its humblest forms, dowered with the blessing of a loving God ; man partaking of the Divine through his immortal soul, and placed in this world in order to work out his salvation by obedience—these are priceless conceptions. But they do not exhaust the contents of this marvellous opening chapter. There is the great truth that Nature is one—one because it has come from a single hand—a truth forced upon the scientific investigator at every step he takes. It is a truth formally set forth in the dogma of the Divine unity, the one dogma which the Law

most implicitly and solemnly enunciates, as though anticipating that it would be the last to which the thoughts of men would painfully uplift themselves. And the one God thus proclaimed is a moral God, 'the judge of all the earth who cannot but do right.' [1] and He is in everlasting contact with the souls He has made, 'the God of the spirits of all flesh.' [2] Thus all goodness flows from Him. Human righteousness is no chance phenomenon, no arbitrary product of blind evolution, but the reflex of a heavenly archetype. Men must needs be holy, because God Himself is holy. [3] And so the Pentateuch is a majestic law—'a law of fire,' as it describes itself,[4] that burns its way into the human conscience—a law that appeals to the highest and noblest in man, to his sense of fealty to the universal principle of goodness, to the Divine in himself. And yet it is a law full of graciousness and mercy, given out of the Divine 'love for the peoples,' [5] and preaching to men the duty of love. Justice is the corner-stone of its ethical fabric, but tender compassion is its crown. 'Righteousness, righteousness—that shalt thou pursue,' [6] but also 'Love thy neighbour as thyself,' [7] 'Hate no man, not even the Egyptian, thy oppressor, for thou wast a

[1] Gen. xviii. 25. [2] Numb. xvi. 22. [3] Levit. xix. 2.
[4] Deut. xxxiii. 2. [5] ibid. verse 3.
[6] Deut. xvi. 20. [7] Levit. xix. 18.

stranger in his land '[1]—one of the most striking pleas advanced by any moral code.

And then, finally, there is Israel, who sat at God's feet to receive His commands. He is 'a kingdom of priests and a holy nation'[2]—priests ministering to the congregation of mankind, the nucleus of a wider kingdom to be wrested for God from the sad and sordid world. This is the proud task of God's people. Who would not glory in it? Well is Moses described as crying in his farewell benediction, "Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, a people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, the sword of thine excellency?'[3] With thoughts of God's mercy and his people's greatness—a greatness springing from no material advantages, but only from spiritual possessions—the Lawgiver breathes out his mighty soul. Ah, let us glory in our mission, for its own sake, for *his*. Let us be true to it, but remember in our loyalty to pay homage to the man whose sight, clarified by the air of heaven, discerned it for us, and whose genius won for it the acceptance of countless generations.

[1] Deut. xxiii. 7. [2] Exod. xix. 6. [3] Deut. xxxiii. 29.

GREEK AND JEW

(A CHANUCAH SERMON FOR YOUNG PEOPLE)

To-day, by a chance coincidence, both Jew and Christian are engaged in celebrating a great festival. There was a time in the remote past when their festive observance linked them even in spirit. It is not generally known that in its early years the Church devoted a special day, known as the 'Birthday of the Maccabees,' to the memory of the hero whose deeds we Jews gratefully recall on the Feast of Chanucah. That day fell in the summer, and commemorated more particularly the martyrdom of the Jewish mother and her seven sons, of which you will read an account in the Second Book of the Maccabees. Christendom once saw that the religious stedfastness which the deathless conflict evoked two thousand years ago was no less worthy of Christian than of Jewish homage—that, as a type of the conquest of the heathen world by pure religion, it is as much the property of the Gentile as of the Jew. 'The story

of the Maccabees,' says a distinguished Christian divine and scholar,[1] ' was in truth much more thought of by the ancient Church than it is by us, and we might well be led by this to " consider our ways and be wise." ' It would be strange if one day, as the result of a clearer perception on the part of Christendom of its debt to Judas Maccabeus and his gallant comrades, the Christian should join the Jew in celebrating the Feast of Dedication.

But I must not forget that I have promised to consider in this present sermon the special needs of young people. What I have said thus far will form no inappropriate introduction to what I have yet to say. I have spoken of a Christian debt to the Maccabees. I may widen the phrase, and call it the world's debt. Let me try to justify this expression. It would not be enough to say that the Maccabees fought against the Greeks. They did more: they fought against Greek ideas. With the Greeks personally they had no special quarrel. They would have been content to live with them, and under them. Politics did not greatly stir their blood. Even national independence—at first, at any rate—did not seem worth the bones of a single Jewish peasant. But when it came to a struggle between their conceptions of life and

[1] Cheyne: *The Origin of the Psalter*, page 29.

conduct and those of their Greek masters, then the dispute became serious. They struck out boldly like a hunted animal at bay, and, unlike some animals at bay, they routed their assailants. Now, what were the great issues that so mightily moved these peaceful men, and changed them into lions? In other words, what was the source of this sharp antagonism between the Jewish spirit and the Greek?

This is no needless inquiry to which to invite even young people. The study of the Greek and Roman classics—the Romans borrowed much from the Greeks—occupies a large space nowadays in the work of every school with any pretensions to importance. Are we safe in accepting all the ideas they embody as unquestionable truth? The ancient Greeks, although they have long since passed from this earthly scene, are still a living influence. It is quite a common thing to read or to be told that the two forces that have most powerfully helped to shape the world's thought and life are Hellenism, *i.e.* the Greek spirit, and Hebraism, *i.e.* the Jewish spirit. If every youth ought to understand something about the age in which he lives, about the civilization which is its characteristic, about the great movements that are making its history, he ought to know something about the nature of these two forces. In what, then, does Hellenism differ from Hebraism?

Let me hasten to add that they are not opposed at every point. From the Greek genius the world has derived benefits which the Jew not only ought to acknowledge, but which he has already acknowledged again and again. It was Greece which by its sculpture, its architecture, its literature, stirred the world's dormant sense of beauty. It was Greece that fostered the passion for freedom which is at the root of modern liberties, of modern progress, of modern material well-being. It was Greece that spread, if it did not kindle, that love of truth which gave a mighty impulse to the inquiry and research that have culminated in the scientific triumphs of our times.

I say that we Jews have not withheld our recognition from these beneficent achievements. The Apocrypha, which we treasure only less than the Bible, Philo, Maimonides, the greatest of medieval Jewish authorities, are but examples of the liberal use that Judaism has made of Greek thought and of the generous homage it has paid to it. Seldom, if ever, has the Jew been so churlish or so narrow-minded as to deny or to ignore the good in Hellenism merely because some of its elements have conflicted with his own cherished ideals. But such elements there were, and it was against them that the Maccabees fought when they fought the Greeks, their living embodiment. They

fought not so much against principles as against the Greek mode of applying them. Both Jew and Greek loved freedom; but whereas the Greek made liberty an end in itself, the Jew saw that if it were to be really good, really fruitful, really blessed, it must be limited—subordinated to the law of God. The Jew was not insensible to the power of beauty, to the grace and charm and delight that it lent to the daily life, though his perception of it may not have been so keen as that of the Greeks. But whereas the Greek *worshipped* art, the Jew recognized something more desirable still, and that was inner loveliness. The Greek found the aim of life in pleasure; the Jew found it in obedience, in the sacrifice of his selfish instincts at the call of God and humanity. The Greek praised the holiness of beauty; the Jew, the beauty of holiness. The one thought himself justified in following his own desires, justified by the example of his gods, who lived lawless lives; the other felt himself for ever constrained to curb those desires by the thought of 'the righteous God who loveth righteousness,' by the conviction that there was an eternal law of virtue laid down by the Supreme, to obey which was the only happiness, to defy which the only misery. To the thought of God, in the case of the Jew, was added the love of man. The Jewish heart was filled with a passion for

justice, with a tenderness, with a pity, to which the pagan was a stranger. The wide benevolence, the humane spirit, the feeling of brotherhood making the whole world kin, which are the notes of this age, are the products of the Jewish spirit. 'The Jews,' says a modern writer,[1] contrasting them with the Greeks, 'the Jews acquired a more universal sympathy. They had learned by suffering. They had been outcasts and oppressed. By sharp discipline they had come to know the meaning of patience, of self-abnegation, of faith in the unseen; and hence, by right of deeper insight into the moral needs of man, it has been their prerogative to be for all succeeding ages the consolers and interpreters of suffering humanity.'

Equally due to Judaism are the self-renunciation which has come to be recognized as the foundation of all noble conduct, and the perception that conscience, the voice within us, is the echo of an unalterable law of righteousness, the echo of God's law. How mightily have these ideals influenced the world! How abundantly have they blessed the world! In fighting for Judaism the Maccabees fought for these ideals. In making the cause of Judaism triumph they made them victorious. 'Honour the brave and bold'; honour them, too, not merely

[1] Butcher: *Some Aspects of the Greek Genius*, page 75.

for their bravery, but for the noble cause to which they consecrated their valour. And how can you honour them better than by upholding in your own lives the ideas they so strenuously defended? For the old conflict with Hellenism is still raging, and we must take sides in it. There are those in our day—men of authority—who would have the Greek spirit entirely supplant the Jewish, who would have men forswear the true God and yield themselves to a new paganism—to an idolatry of man, to a worship of the intellect, to a deification of pleasure. There are those who find the highest good in culture, who say to beauty, 'Be thou my god.' 'Let life be fair and pleasant,' they argue, 'and it matters not whether it be noble.' 'Cultivate the intellect,' they cry; 'never mind about the heart.' Now, as in the days of the Maccabees, there are Jews ready to embrace this doctrine—Jews who do not fear to renounce the religion of their fathers, with all its exalted teaching, all its splendid inspiration, moved not by a love of the truth, but by a sordid desire for ease and comfort and worldly success—moved, in a word, by base expediency. Heine, the German poet, whose centenary fell a week or two ago,[1] is the type of such minds. A Hellenist he professed himself to be; and if he had been content with what was worthy in

[1] Preached in December, 1899.

Hellenism—if he had consecrated his genius to beautifying human life and to gladdening the human heart—the world would have written on his tomb an epitaph of unqualified admiration and respect. But he had the defects as well as the merits of the Greek. He was an egoist, a mocker of holy things, a man without stability of character. Men remember him to-day because of his brilliant talents. They think of him with wonder, with regret, with pity. But if to his talents there had been united firm principle and a feeling heart, they would think of him with gratitude and love. We Jews have certainly little cause to honour his memory. For, like the week-kneed Jews of the Maccabæan age, he was a renegade of the worst kind. 'Judaism,' he said, 'is not a religion but a misfortune.' He became a Christian, not because he believed in Christianity—he despised it—but because it seemed to him the path to advancement, to popularity and power. He regretted his cowardice afterwards—regretted it all the more, perhaps, because, as usually happens, it defeated its own aim, and never yielded him the advantages he expected from it. Nay, he came to lament the want of insight that led him to prefer Hellenism to Judaism. 'I see now,' he confessed, 'that the Greeks were only beautiful youths, the Jews strong and stedfast men.' It was one of the wisest things he ever said.

I would ask you to cherish this saying of a man who uttered many sayings far less worthy of respect. Cultivate the graces of life; seek after knowledge, after intellectual brilliancy, after prosperity and social power if you will. But above all these things put duty, put character, put religion. Try to reconcile the two great opposing forces in human life. Seek to be beautiful youths as the Greeks did—graceful in person and strong of frame—but let your chief, your highest aim be to grow up stedfast men and women, as the old Hebrews were—men and women who know what is right, and will do it whatever the cost. Prize culture; but high above it place goodness—goodness which has self-denial for its root and crown. Deny yourselves—sacrifice your lower inclinations—for God's sake; deny yourselves—forgo some of your possessions, your comfort, your pleasures—for the sake of others, for such as are poor and friendless and afflicted. But amid all your noble strivings after loyalty to this old Jewish ideal be faithful to the most characteristically Jewish aim of all—the preaching of the one, the only God, the God of righteousness, the God of the human soul. Be on your guard against the specious temptation to be untrue to Judaism—the temptation to break with it, or to conceal your share in it, or even to apologize for it, at the bidding of self-interest. Identify your-

selves boldly and thankfully with Israel. Far from considering Judaism a misfortune learn to regard it as a blessing ; for a blessing it is to cherish the hopes and the faith of the prophets and the psalmists, to inherit the sword of the Maccabees ! Only one real misfortune can overtake you—it is to show yourselves abjectly weak like the renegades of the Maccabæan age—to part with all that should have been most sacred to you, only to find yourselves condemned by your conscience, distrusted by the very world you thought to conciliate. From such wretchedness may God mercifully keep you all ! Nay, you can keep yourselves from it. Only be strong and of good courage. Only be true to the ideas for which the Maccabees fought so valiantly in the days of old—ideas that will assuredly be the source of your own ennoblement, seeing that for ages past they have been helping slowly, but mightily, to ennoble the world.

'IN GOD'S NAME'

'In the name of our God we will set up our banners.' —PSALM XX. 5.

In Gottes Namen, 'in God's name'—such was the title given by the pious Jew of old to the day that immediately follows Kippur. 'In God's name'—it is a charming phrase. It is one of the many little indications which go to prove the deep spirituality underlying all the seeming formalism of the old-world Israelite. Our pious fathers of bygone times were quick to discern wherein consists the true value of the Atonement Day. The great test of its efficacy, they saw, was not the manner of its observance, not the scrupulosity of the fasting, not the fervour of the prayers, not even the passion of penitence, but the permanent impress left by the day upon the worshipper's heart and life. Not while it was present, but when it was gone, was it possible to say whether it had been a success or a failure. Not the day itself, but the next day, was the critical time. This thought it was that gave birth to the title I have mentioned: 'In God's name.' That

day, all unnoted though it was in the almanac, was to be God's day—devoted to Him, though in a way quite different from that in which Kippur had been consecrated. The great day had been given to prayer and holy meditation. This little day was to be devoted to consecrated action. Not the soul, but the life, was to be touched to finer issues, to be laid at God's feet as a humble offering. The familiar round of commonplace occupations was to be commenced anew, the threads of the worldly life were to be gathered up again, and the weaving of the fateful fabric recommenced; but all was to be done in a humble, a chastened, a holy spirit. The most trivial act was to be performed in God's name, for God's sake.

We may carry the interpretation a little further. This obscure day, which pious feeling might make glorious—this day of little things which might be transfigured and become a day of great things—was but the type of what every working day ought to be, a day lived under a sense of responsibility, in a joyous consciousness of service. A process of spiritual refraction was to keep the mystic light of Kippur shining above the horizon throughout the whole year, to illumine and sanctify the daily life, to make each thought a prayer, each desire a genuflexion, each act a step heavenward. The great warfare of practical life was about to

begin anew after the brief respite of the penitential season. With a new heart, in a new spirit, was the Israelite to enter upon it once more. It was to be for him a holy war. He was to be God's soldier. In the name of the Lord was he to set up his banner.

The penitential season is over for us too, and the workaday life has claimed us once more. How shall we bear ourselves in it? Let us try to answer this question by forming a mental picture of the true Israelite's day, of the day lived 'in God's name.' There cannot be a more valuable aid to practical religion.

The Israelite will begin his day in God's name; he will begin it with prayer. The day is his, but only because God has given it to him. It is his, but only in trust. So that his first act will be to breathe words of thanksgiving for the renewed vigour that has come to him on the wings of the morning, and of supplication for guidance and strength that will enable him to find and to keep the higher way. The prayer need not be long. Even the Rabbins [1] could point to the power of a brief petition like that of Moses, 'O Lord, heal her now, I beseech Thee,' [2] which brought down relief for his suffering sister from the heavenly storehouse. Nor does it matter in what language the

[1] Berachoth, 31a. [2] Numb. xii. 13.

prayer is uttered ; what is essential is that it should be the speech of the heart.[1] It need not be culled from any liturgy ; the soul left to itself will often frame the most suitable petition, though it be in halting words. About private prayer no fixed rule can be laid down. 'The heart knoweth its own bitterness' and its own joys. It knows best its needs, its hopes, its yearnings. Moreover its moods change from day to day. Yesterday it was confident, elate, steeped in a profound content ; to-day it is downcast, apprehensive, tearful. All that can be said to each heart is : take your troubles or your joys to God ; tell Him of them in words that best give them voice, either in the language of Prayer-book or Psalter, or in your own spontaneous and unstudied phrase. Be not over anxious about the form of your prayer ; but be sure you pray, or at least try to pray. Do not hastily assume that you are not in a devout mood, and that it is useless to make the effort to worship. Try to get near to God ; very often the endeavour ensures its own success, the attempt to pray will make you prayerful. The pious Israelites of ancient times, we are told, were wont to wait awhile before they engaged in their devotions, so that meditation might gradually attune their minds to prayerful

[1] Mishnah Sotah, vii. 1 ; Taanith, 2a.

feeling. We lead much busier lives in these days ; but would it not be well to devote a few moments to quiet thought as a prelude to prayer, or even as its occasional substitute ? We do not always realize the spiritual value of such peaceful self-communings. They are themselves worship. The psalmists, the most fervent men of prayer that ever lived, knew their worth. 'Commune with your hearts on your bed and be still,' cries one.[1] 'My heart was hot within me,' cries another ;[2] 'while I was musing the fire kindled, then spake I with my tongue.' Thought in this case ripens into supplication. It is a striking record of spiritual experience.

The religious foundation of the day being thus laid by prayer, the momentous task of doing the day's work nobly and well may be courageously and hopefully approached. The bread-winner will go forth to his toil until eventide, but in a spirit begotten of his recent devotions. He will do his work for God's sake. He will do it because the Divine voice has called him to do it, because the familiar tasks are the rough material out of which he may fashion the edifice of the higher life—the life beautiful. His work will occupy its due place in his thoughts. He will neither despise it nor

[1] Psalm iv. 4. [2] ibid. xxxix. 3.

deify it. He will not regard it as monotonous drudgery that is derogatory, degrading; nor will he abase himself before it as the greatest good, as his master and saviour. He will revere it as a discipline which lifts him heavenward by the industry, the integrity, the feeling of tender consideration for his dependents—in a word the self-restraint—it calls into play. He will revere it because it establishes a co-partnership between him and the Supreme, because in doing it he is contributing, in however humble a degree, to the accomplishment of God's stupendous purpose in the world. And so he will guard himself against performing his daily tasks in a contemptuous or listless spirit. His will be the temper of Stradivarius, the violin maker, in the poem :—

> If my hand slacked,
> I should rob God—since He is fullest good—
> Leaving a blank instead of violins.
> *He* could not make Antonio Stradivari's violins
> Without Antonio.

But just because he feels himself for ever working with God he will be on his guard against making a god out of his work. It shall not be a Juggernaut before which he abjectly prostrates himself, while its cruel wheels crush out of him all the life of the spirit. It shall be not the end, but the means, the race, not the prize. It shall not be a vampire that drains him of all

his best energies. Money he will try to get, because the attempt is the seed of all human progress, and because, in getting it, he will get something infinitely better: the perfecting of his own character, the materials of growth, physical and intellectual, for his children. But he will only *get* it, he will only *win* it; he will not sell himself for it; he will not barter away for it his health of body or mind, or the purity of his soul.

And the same sane temper will mark the housewife. She, too, will see her work in its true perspective. She will do it bravely and faithfully, not disdaining the homeliest of tasks, seeing that, like her husband's toil in the world outside, they make for her own moral uplifting and for the well-being of her little kingdom. You know what the old poet sings in his sweet, quaint way—

> Who sweeps a room as for God's laws,
> Makes that and the action fine.

The true mother in Israel will live in the spirit of the song, for so have lived her mothers before her ever since the far-off day of the ideal housewife in Proverbs, who 'seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands,' who 'looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.'[1] Significant

[1] Proverbs xxxi. 13, 27.

indeed is it that the possessor of these homely virtues is praised as a woman that 'feareth the Lord.'[1] For surely the heart that can perform these familiar tasks nobly, making them a source of 'strength and dignity,'[2] is already filled abundantly with the religious spirit. But, on the other hand, a true woman will be the mistress of her work, not its slave. It will not absorb all her energies. Other obligations, no less holy, claim her leisure. Like her ancient prototype, she will 'spread out her hand to the poor';[3] large-hearted, well-considered charity will have the foremost place among her activities. She will not be of those who, having given themselves to their home tasks with feverish energy, either sink down into a state of limp indolence, or allow themselves to be caught in a whirl of pleasure-seeking. Not only is there poverty and suffering to be alleviated, there are needs within the household itself which loudly cry out for relief. There are the children, whose characters have to be diligently and carefully formed. How much insight and wisdom does this solemn task not demand! With what patient, earnest thought, what truly prayerful feeling, shall it not be approached! And then there is the religious life of the little ones, with all its tremendous significance for their moral life in the after-

[1] Proverbs xxxi. 30. [2] ibid. verse 25. [3] ibid. verse 20.

days of storm and stress. Can any time be grudged that is devoted to this stupendous task? Surely the ideal mother will take her child on her knee now and again, and talk to him of God. Surely she will see that those tiny hands are folded daily in prayer.

And so the day's work will go on to the end, with the Divine Name for ever in the Israelite's thoughts, the Divine Presence for ever in his heart. And then, when eventide comes, and with it the time for throwing off the day's cares and preoccupations, the same holy temper will manifest itself. Recreation, enjoyment, is now the toiler's right, the guerdon of his toil. That enjoyment will be calm and pure; but to partake of it will be no less a duty than his work has been. For Judaism loveth a cheerful spirit. 'God comes,' it declares,[1] 'not to the indolent nor to them that needlessly repine, but to them that serve with glad hearts.' The ideal Jew is not a 'knight of the woful countenance,' on the watch for all the evil and misery and ugliness of the world, and steadily shutting his eyes to its brightness and its beauty. 'See life'—so runs the old Scriptural exhortation[2]—and see it he will. He will taste of its sweets; he will sun himself in its radiance; he will let some of its light invade his heart and dispossess

[1] Shabbath, 30b. [2] Ecclesiastes ix. 9.

the shadows. He will do this, not only because 'the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun',[1] but because it is one of his debts to God. The luscious fruit hangs from the bough, the gift of the Divine bounty. Only a churlish ingratitude would refuse to partake of it; only an unnatural austerity, a crabbed, a distorted piety, would turn sanctimoniously away from it. 'Hereafter,' say the Rabbins,[2] 'men will have to render an account for every legitimate pleasure they have rejected.' It is a bold saying, but it faithfully reflects the genius of Jewish teaching. Every pure joy is a divine gift, which we cannot thrust away from us without sin. The ideal Israelite will bear this saving truth in mind. He will end his day in a glad attempt to forget its cares. He will be happy for God's sake, and because his happiness has so lofty a motive it will be pure and therefore real. 'The joy of the Lord' will indeed be 'his strength.' Because in his pleasures he has remembered the Supreme, because he has recorded the Divine name in his joys, God, mindful of His ancient promise, will come to him and bless him.

[1] Ecclesiastes xi. 7.

[2] Jer. Kiddushin, Chap. iv. (end).

AN OLD PRIVATE PRAYER

THE Daily Prayer Book which we are using for our Service this morning contains, as you know, a number of passages designed for private use exclusively. This characteristic it shares with its more conservative predecessors. If you examine the Jewish Service Books of the so-called 'orthodox' rite, you will find a large space allotted to private prayers. Some of those prayers are very beautiful, and many a discourse might not unprofitably be devoted to their consideration. For many of them, besides breathing a deep spirituality, throw an interesting side-light upon the inner history of our medieval forefathers. One example, about which a correspondent wrote to me a short time ago, I should like to bring under your notice this morning.

Following immediately on the familiar prayer of *Alenu*, there are printed in the old Prayer Books of the German rite the following three Scriptural verses: 'Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked when it cometh,' which you will find in the

third chapter of Proverbs ; ' Take counsel together, and it shall be brought to nought ; speak the word, and it shall not stand ; for God is with us,' which is taken from the eighth chapter of Isaiah ; and then, finally, ' Even to old age I am He, and even to gray hairs will I carry you ; I have made, and I will bear ; yea, I will carry and will deliver '—a quotation from the forty-sixth chapter of the same Book. If you examine these verses, you will perceive that one common thought links them together. All alike express implicit trust in God, the conviction that they who confide in Him are safe, and that no real evil can touch them.

And so we can readily surmise how they came to be chosen for recital at the close of the daily Morning Prayer.[1] Having concluded his devotions, the worshipper was about to go forth to his work in the world—in times of oppression (and they were numerous enough in past ages) to his conflict not only with giant circumstance,

[1] In Midrash Rabbah to Esther iii. 9 there is a legend to the effect that, when the decree of Ahasuerus for the extermination of the Jews was published, Mordecai, meeting three Jewish children, asked them in turn to tell him the verse from the Bible which each had last learnt at school. In reply each repeated one of the three verses forming this prayer. When Mordecai heard the words, he ' rejoiced greatly,' for he saw in them an omen assuring him of the defeat of Haman's designs. See Baer : *Abodath Yisrael*, p. 132.

but with hostile men. And these three texts were intended to hearten him for the twofold battle. They were addressed to him, so to speak, as a spiritual ' send-off ' on the new stage of his life's journey that lay before him. That all would be well with him in the day just begun, that life need have no terrors for the good, that human enmity cannot prevail against those who have God with them, that the Divine protection is ever vouchsafed to the trusting heart, lasting through all the changes and chances of this mortal state—this was the welcome message which the devout Jew was exhorted to take with him as the fruit of his worship.

The addition of such utterances to the statutory Service gives us a valuable clue to the temper of our pious ancestors of ancient times. Prayer was a real thing to them—not, as is sometimes supposed, a piece of mere mechanical routine, or even an interval of spiritual exaltation, genuine yet transient, but an influence that went down to the roots of the personal life, to the springs of everyday conduct. From it they won something more than satisfaction of soul ; they gained inward strength and courage to confront the difficulties and the dangers that awaited them in the world outside. And those difficulties and dangers were especially serious for them, victims as

they were of a relentless persecution. At any moment that persecution might become active. They might have to pass from the House of Prayer into streets made hideous with opprobrious and insulting cries, or, worse still, with calls to outrages on the execrated Jew. They might go from the peaceful precincts of the synagogue, to find their homes in the possession of a marauding and bloodthirsty mob. But all such perils they were ready to face with stedfast hearts—with hearts nerved and uplifted by the thought that God was on their side, and that though the forces of evil might have their way for a time, the good and the right would be victorious in the end. They themselves might have to suffer, but the Divine cause would inevitably triumph, and with their suffering that triumph would be cheaply purchased. They themselves might go down in the struggle, but God remained —God, who never changes, and who takes care of His own to the last. 'Even to old age I am He, and even to gray hairs will I carry you; I have made, and I will bear; yea, I will carry and will deliver.'

The presence of such passages in the Prayer Book explains the secret of the success with which the Jew of the Middle Ages resisted his redoubtable foes. The just lived by his faith. The conviction that all the forces of right and truth—all the forces of the universe itself—

were on his side, endowed him with the strength needed to brave and overcome the deadly perils that threatened him. Who shall adequately estimate the part that the Prayer Book has played in fashioning the life-story of Israel? The Prayer Book, do I say? Rather let me say the Bible; for the Prayer Book is moulded out of the Bible—the verses before us are literal extracts from it.

But this sacred literature powerfully influenced the personal life of the Jews as well as their collective fortunes. The worshipper who rounded off his devotions with these texts left the Divine Presence armed against the ordinary, everyday troubles unto which man is born as the sparks fly upwards. When God was with him what could the world do to him? Every earthly sorrow was dwarfed by the thought of the everlasting, unchanging God, whose mercies never fail, but are new every morning—lost in the vision of a Divine Hand outstretched to take and to bear the burden of the suffering heart.

And the third verse, which most clearly expresses this thought, is the one that we shall be most inclined to store up in our memory for our own use. 'Even to old age I am He, and even to gray hairs will I carry you; I have made, and I will bear; yea, I will carry and will deliver.' They are lovely words; but they do

not stand alone in the Bible. Our Scriptures teem with utterances expressive of that fatherly compassion of God which moves Him to take upon Himself the load of His sorrowing children —yes, and to carry them too, as a mother her babe. Earlier in Isaiah the Prophet, in a passage of exquisite beauty,[1] pictures God as feeding His flock like a shepherd, gathering the lambs in His arms, and carrying them in His bosom. Another Prophet, Hosea,[2] describes the Supreme as performing the same gracious office for His people, and moreover as patiently teaching them to walk, like one who guides the tottering feet of a little child. And then there is the Psalmist's cry [3]: 'Blessed be the Lord who daily beareth our burdens,' and his exhortation [4] 'Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee.' It is this vision of a Being of infinite love, of unique self-abnegation, descending from His majestic throne to share, to take over, the troubles of men, that gives us the comfort and the stay needed for a brave and a cheerful facing of life's trials. 'Give Me,' God says, 'give Me your cares, your anxieties, your pain; I will bear them for you.' And the very thought itself is healing. Because we hear the gracious offer,

[1] Isaiah xl. 11. [2] Hosea xi. 3. [3] Psalm lxviii. 19.
[4] Psalm lv. 22.

the promise that goes with it is realized. The burden is lifted by the certainty that there is One ready to take it from us. And that One is the Eternal and the Almighty God. He that carries our load, He that carries *us*, fails not, nor is weary ; He is stronger than fate, mightier than the fiercest sorrow. He is ever the same, unchanging amid a universe of change, true to us, to Himself, in our old age, as He was in our youth. Ah, that is the most comforting thought of all ! Amid the vicissitudes and the uncertainties of life there is one Being who is ever the same—one with whom we may find safe anchorage, no matter what storms are raging. ' The years multiply, the space that separates us from the inevitable end slowly diminishes, disappointments and reverses add their successive contributions to our sombre experiences, our beloved go from us one by one. But God remains, and remains with us—if we will only keep Him—to the end, to old age and to gray hairs. If we will only keep Him ! For it all rests with us. Let us desire God's supporting Hand—wish for the solace of His companionship in our advancing years, for His help to bear our trials, for His arms to carry us as ' on eagles' wings '—and the desire will be granted. All that is needed is that firm trust in Him and His saving power which uplifted and helped our worshipping forefathers. And

surely the resulting blessing is worth the effort. A recent writer[1] describes himself as sitting on late into the night in his rooms at College. The beauty of the place, the quiet of the hour, the majesty of the starry Heavens, cast their spell upon him, and set him thinking. 'All here,' he says, 'seems so permanent, so still, so secure, and yet we are spinning and whirling through space to some unknown goal. What are the thoughts of the mighty unresting Heart, to whose vastness and agelessness the whole mass of these flying and glowing suns are but as a handful of dust that a boy flings upon the air? . . . Has He indeed a tender and a patient thought of me, the frail creature whom He has moulded and made? I do not doubt it; I look up among the star-sown spaces, and the old aspiration rises in my heart, "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him! that I might come even into His presence!" How would I go, like a tired and sorrowful child to his father's knee, to be comforted and encouraged, in perfect trust and love, to be raised in His arms, to be held to His heart. He would but look in my face, and I should understand without a question, without a word.'

And this priceless boon is granted to every heart that has found God. It is given with the finding of Him.

[1] Arthur Benson: *From a College Window.*

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

'And he said, Show me, I pray Thee, Thy glory. And He said, I will make all My goodness pass before thee. . . . But no man shall see Me and live.'—EXODUS xxxiii. 18–20.

THE general purport of this sublime passage is clear. Moses, with all the daring of his nature, would penetrate to the inmost shrine of truth. He would know God—know Him in all His glory. But his ambition is rebuked. There are limits, he is warned, to human knowledge of the Supreme. God reveals Himself in part to men, and chiefly through His goodness. But all the divine mystery can never be solved for them, in this life at least. 'I will make all My goodness pass before thee; but no man shall see Me and live.'

An eminent surgeon, who has won the distinction of having, humanly speaking, been chiefly instrumental in saving the life of the King in his late dangerous illness, has addressed some notable words to members of his profession during the past few days. The symptoms of disease, he said, were once regarded even by

men of science as evils. The right view to take of them was that they were signs of beneficence. Pain, far from being the bane, was the salvation of the sufferer. It was a danger-signal and a protection. Benevolence reigned in the very regions of human experience where we should be most inclined to deny its existence. Such, in brief, was the purport of Sir Frederick Treves's utterance, and its significance is heightened by the fact that the speaker has had recently to mourn the loss of one very near to him, one who has been cut off by the very disease to which he was more particularly alluding.

This deliberately recorded opinion, which, I may add, remarkably coincides with the recently expressed views of that veteran surgeon, Sir Henry Thompson, is interesting in more than one way. Sir Frederick Treves referred to an old seventeenth century physician, Sir Thomas Browne, who wrote a book called *The Religion of a Physician*, from which it is evident that, for him, pain and disease were calamities pure and simple, evils without one redeeming feature. Here, then, is a direct conflict of opinion upon a question of the greatest moment. Are we not entitled to say that the earlier view was the narrower one, and that as our knowledge increases, as Science enlarges her boundaries, the benevolence which

rules the Universe will be disclosed more clearly to the gaze ? Thus Science reveals God to us as a Being who is not only mighty and majestic, but beneficent too. It tells us of His power, but, what is yet more wonderful, seeing who the witness is, of His love also. We ask to be shown God's glory, and in response He makes His goodness pass before us.

The incident upon which I am commenting is instructive from yet another point of view. With certain minds the idea prevails that there is an irreconcilable antagonism between Religion and Science. Young people, more especially perhaps, are prone to think that the great stumbling-block in the way of the religious life is the unscientific character of the fundamental doctrine upon which it is based. They have an impression, more or less vague, that it is possible to believe in a Supreme Being only by suspending one's reasoning powers, and by ignoring the conclusions of modern scientific thinkers. The idea is quite erroneous. There was a time, no doubt, when it would have been pardonable to entertain it. I can remember the famous address delivered before the British Association at Belfast by the late Professor Tyndall thirty years ago, and the tremendous effect it produced upon thinking men, with its glorification of matter as containing ' the promise and potency of every form

and quality of life.' It shook the faith of many ; it set others trembling for the future of Religion. There is no doubt that the destructive tendency of Tyndall's discourse was over-estimated. Read dispassionately now, in the clearer light which three decades of progress have brought us, the kind of materialism it preached is seen to be not so terrible after all. But certain it is that the address was the starting-point of a new intellectual movement, by which Religion both lost and profited. The attitude of thoughtful men towards religious faith was sensibly changed, for the time even revolutionized. Articles upholding the agnostic position rapidly followed each other in the magazines, and were eagerly read. Never, to all appearances, was Religion so hopelessly discredited. To be a sceptic was to have the very hall-mark of culture. This condition of things lasted for perhaps some twenty years, and then there was a reaction. Religion, it was found, instead of being destroyed by such doctrines as those taught at Belfast, had simply been set in a new and a nobler light. God had not been deposed from His throne ; men had only come to know Him a little better, acquired larger and saner conceptions of His nature and His rule. Contrast the scientific temper and the tone of magazine literature to-day with what they were ten or fifteen years ago, and you will appreciate the

salutary change that has taken place in educated opinion on this subject.

The truth thus exemplified is twofold. It is clear, first of all, that men's religious ideas are liable to modification under the influence of scientific progress. Judaism welcomes the thought. For she stands for truth, and every step towards the harmonizing of Religion with Science can only be a step towards that simplification of creed, that recognition of the one Almighty and majestic God of the universe which it is her historic mission to promote. Far from dreading or deprecating this tendency, she hails it with joy, for it foreshadows her ultimate triumph. It is no unmeaning cry that escapes the worshipper in the synagogue every Sabbath: 'May all the peoples of the earth know that the Eternal is God, and that there is none else!'

But while Religion, or, to be more accurate, Theology, is susceptible of change, so too, let it be always remembered, is Science. The modern physician corrects his predecessor's view of pain. The reign of love in the universe, still scouted by some students of Nature, is not less fervently upheld by others than is the reign of law. They are rash indeed who imagine that Science has said her last word on the eternal problem. She has done nothing of the sort. And if she knows her place—

realizes her limitations—she will never say that word. 'The age of the preachers is passing; those who speak with authority on the riddles of life and nature, as the priests of this or that all-explaining dogma, are becoming less important as knowledge spreads, and the complexity of experience is made evident to a wider range of minds. The force of things is against *the certain people*.'[1] Are the votaries of Science exceptionally excluded? It would be hazardous to say so. Certain theories and discoveries of late years have gone far to shake men's confidence in the omniscience of Science. The hypothesis of the existence throughout space of the ether, which is utterly unlike, we are assured, any known substance in Nature, should give pause to those men of Science who laugh at religionists because of their faith. And now the discovery of the properties of radium has set the scientific world asking whether it will not have to revise some of its most elementary ideas concerning the life-story and the very constitution of the physical universe. A dogmatist like Haeckel may claim to have explained the cosmos by reference to purely physical processes. But the majority of scientific thinkers will repudiate such preten-

[1] Mrs. Humphry Ward in the Introduction to Amiel's *Journal*, p. xliii.

sions. No one recognizes more clearly than they how little they know. By their own admission there is a realm of knowledge which they are powerless to penetrate, a vast world of being and experience which cannot be explored by their methods. For ever an insuperable barrier interposes between them and the mysterious Power behind phenomena, and there is an unseen universe which is none the less real because the instruments of Science are unable to interpret its manifestations or even to reveal its existence. Even Haeckel himself, following Tyndall in the Belfast address, acknowledges the truth There is a force, he feels, behind Nature which, in his own words, 'becomes more mysterious and enigmatic the deeper we penetrate into the knowledge of its attributes.' And yet by a strange contradiction he professes to have solved the riddle of the world, to have shown that there is no place in it for the God of Religion. What an arrogant assumption! He would dethrone the Supreme while confessing Him. He would tell us how the universe has come into being whilst admitting his ignorance of the Power to whose working it witnesses.

And this self-contradiction characterizes every agnostic thinker. He would spell the whole story of Nature when he does not know even its alphabet. The most familiar things—

life and thought—defy his analysis. He tries to explain them. Life, he will assure us, is protoplasm, thought a certain modification of the brain-stuff. But these so-called explanations really tell us nothing. 'A tear,' cries one of Balzac's characters, 'a tear, what is it? With a little water, a little gum, I could make one.' But is that a tear? Or is there not something more, far more—the pain, the pity, which transform these physical ingredients of a tear and make it what it is? And so these false men of Science—for false they are even to their own principles—tell us that they know what life is, what thought is, what the universe is, when their pretended knowledge is only ignorance. What we want to learn is not the physical attributes of these things, but the secret of their existence. We want to know what it is that makes that tremendous difference between the dead and the living, between the physical brain and the ethereal thought that plays about it like a flame—what it is that gives us the power to think, to feel, to love. We want to know not *what* we are, but *why* we are. And upon these momentous questions Science is dumb. It admits its inability to say an enlightening word about any of them.

And so it must always be. 'No man shall see Me and live.' By the way of Science,

with its weights and scales, its telescope and spectroscope, God cannot be apprehended. To the eye of the flesh He is for ever invisible. But there are other ways by which He may be approached, and Religion sits at their gates. Let her unlock them, and the glorious region beyond them flashes on the sight. We may see but part of it, but that part is enough. We discern God, purpose, love, reigning in this world below, and the truth of the revelation is attested by the voice of our own souls. For the spirit has its domain just as Science has hers, and is as rightly the mistress of it. The thought of God, the aspiration after Him, life with Him, reverence for the good—Religion itself, in short—these are as truly realities as are the physical laws which it is the glory of Science to have revealed. If Science tells of order and of mind, and therefore of God, in the material world, the soul's experience witnesses to Him in the spiritual sphere. Shall we not accept that testimony too? Even Science herself is beginning to see the wisdom of so doing. The phenomena of the spiritual life are coming to have for the earnest thinker as great a value, as profound a significance, as those of the material universe; and, turned back on the road of physical investigation, he reaches the divine by a higher path. 'No man shall see Me and live'—no; no man, on

his mortal side. But the spirit sees, and knows —is 'satisfied, when it awakes, with God's likeness.' And that knowledge is real, is truth.

THE IMPERISHABLE NEED

'And he shall bring his guilt-offering unto the Lord . . . and the priest shall make atonement for him before the Lord, and he shall be forgiven.'—LEVITICUS vi. 6, 7.

THERE are two aspects of this passage, and both are notable. The thief who would atone for his transgression has to restore the thing he has stolen, together with an added fifth of its value; and only then may he bring his sin-offering. Before he can set himself right with God he must first set himself right with man. The ritual act of sacrifice is useless if the heart and the life be not previously purged, and purged not merely by penitence, but by reparation. This aspect of the text leaps to the eye, and serves to rescue the sacrificial legislation of the Pentateuch from the charge of formalism. But the enactment suggests another truth that is less obvious, though equally valuable. Sacrifice, save as the expression of the changed life, is useless; but if the life be really changed, where is the need of sacrifice? Surely the thief who has made restitution has made the best atonement. So we should think; but

this old Levitical law teaches us otherwise. The penitent, it says, has yet something more to do. When he has made his peace with his fellow-man there still remains the need of making his peace with God.

Here we are face to face with the whole philosophy of the religious idea. The modern critic will tell us that the Mosaic sin-offering was simply a tax levied upon the sinner by the priestly caste for their own purposes. But this is rather an account of it than an explanation. Even assuming that these ancient sacrifices had no higher origin than the self-interest of an avaricious and designing priesthood—which, however, I do not believe—the question remains: why was the tax paid? What was there in the heart of the conscience-stricken offender which secured a ready response to the injunction that demanded an offering from him in the name of God? Why was that name something to conjure with? In other words, what is the explanation of the religious sentiment—that sentiment which plays so enormous a part in human life and has written its impress so deep upon the world's history?

Religion is practically universal. It has been said that if we give the term its widest interpretation, there has never been a race, save for one doubtful exception, that has been wholly lacking in the religious instinct. What

is the origin of this well-nigh universal sentiment? Whence the consciousness of a Power outside ourselves that makes for righteousness, and whose will furnishes a superhuman sanction for duty? There is only one satisfactory answer, I believe, to this question. Confronted with the marvels of the physical world, primitive man interprets them as tokens, as manifestations of the Divine. He sees God alike in the blinding lightning-flash and in the gentler miracle of the growing flower—hears Him in the roar of the thunder and in the still small voice of the babbling stream. The spring which quickens the dead earth, the sun which awakes the slumbering world, are witnesses to a mysterious Power past finding out. But this is not all. Even for the veriest savage there is a spiritual region transcending the realm of sense, however dimly apprehended. Something within him—he knows not what—something born of the material world, yet distinct from it—the terror of lonely places, the unintelligible marvel of birth, the yet greater mystery of death—makes him aware of strange forces that hold him in their grip, forces that he would fain appease and conciliate. This sense of the marvellous is the root of religion. From it the first man started on his way to God. Mr. Frazer in his fascinating book, *The Golden Bough*, has expressed the view that an age of

Religion has everywhere been preceded by an age of Magic.[1] It is merely a surmise, as he admits. But is not magic itself the expression of a crude religion, seeing that it recognizes the existence of the supernatural, of mighty influences, moulding human fate, which man must win over to his side? And in the fact that the religious idea seems to be instinctive in humanity lies the strongest confirmation of the truth of the idea itself. It is impossible to think of the human soul in every stage of its growth 'feeding on ashes,' for ever 'holding a lie in its right hand.' Religion must be the image, faint and inadequate it may be, of a glorious fact. In the power to think of God, to conceive of obligation towards Him, hopelessly removed though He is beyond the reach of the senses, He has set His own witnesses in the human soul.

But this is not the whole account of the matter. Primitive man, feeling the nameless influence of the Divine in his inner being, responds to it by an attempt to get into touch with the Divine from his own side. Hence prayer, worship, propitiation in the rudimentary stage of spiritual development, communion in the higher. The man is in dire peril, and he must seek deliverance from some source surer and mightier than merely human help. He is in trouble,

[1] *The Golden Bough*, 2nd ed., p. 75.

and must be comforted. Joy has found him, and he must tell of it to a sympathetic ear. To whom does he instinctively turn but to the God whom he feels but cannot see, whom he confesses but cannot explain? And then there is his consciousness of sin. The inner voice condemns him—tells him that he has offended against the Divine law, offered dishonour to the Divine person—tells him that he has severed the bonds between him and his Heavenly Master—bonds that were so good and beautiful. And to that voice he must hearken; never will he have peace until he *has* hearkened to it. And so he brings his reconciling gift, hoping with it to set himself right with God, and to restore the old harmonious relations with Him. His priest may tell him to do it, or the impulse may come from his own heart alone. The gift, too, will vary in character with his spiritual growth; it may be merely an animal sacrifice, or a sublime act of prayer. But in origin and intent the act is one and the same. He knows that when he has expiated his sin by restitution or punishment, there still remains the need of reconciliation, of atonement, of forgiveness, of salvation—call it what you will—there still remains one last taint which must be removed before he is cleansed in the sight of God. His brother-man has a mighty claim upon him; but, when that has been duly met,

the demand of the Supreme has yet to be satisfied.

The more one thinks about the existence of the religious idea, the more wonderful it becomes. Man, 'of the earth, earthy,' yet can, and does, aspire to the Highest. With a story full of ignoble passages, he has within him the potentialities of a sublimer life. Will it always be so? Religion, thus far, has been an inalienable characteristic of the human mind; will the time ever come when it is permanently dislodged? Misled by superficial signs, we may be inclined to think that it will. In London, we are told, only one person out of every nine attends a place of worship; and an aged friend of mine, who has necessarily had much experience of men and things, recently warned me to see in such facts an indication of coming events, and to acquiesce in it. 'The religion of the future,' he said, 'will not manifest itself in worship and similar devout acts, but in philanthropy; and,' he added, 'it is well that you should accept the fact instead of resenting it.' He was expressing, it must be owned, the view of a large number of latter-day men and women. For them the ideal life is the beneficent life. 'Let us serve man,' they say, 'and we may well dismiss from our minds the thought of God.' Nay, the service of man, they maintain, is the only practicable service of God.

The text, old as it is, and culled from an obsolete body of laws, teaches us the direct contrary. Neither philanthropy nor morals generally, it reminds us, covers the whole range of human duty. 'Conduct,' said Matthew Arnold, 'is three-fourths of life.' But though the very opposite of a religious fanatic, he did not say that it was the whole of life. When you have made full allowance for the vast demands that morality makes upon human effort there is still a whole realm of obligation untouched. After we have done our duty by our fellow-man—been just to him, aided him, cherished him—there is still God behind it all with His specific claim. When we have satisfied our moral nature there is still the hunger of the spirit to be appeased. When we have restored the thing in which we have dealt unrighteously there is still the stain of our offence to be purged away—that stain which hinders us from acquittal by the Divine judgment. If self-realization is the sum and substance of human duty, then that duty is only half-performed as long as these highter potencies are undeveloped.

Can this conviction ever really die? Will men some day, with one consent, condemn the religious faculty to death by atrophy? Will it come to be regarded as like unto those seemingly useless appendages of the human body

which the surgeon removes with a light heart? Thinkers like Renan say No. 'Nothing,' he declares, 'is more false than the dream of those who, attempting to picture to themselves perfect humanity, conceive of it as without religion. It is the very opposite that one must say. If we can suppose a humanity ten times higher than ours, then that humanity will be infinitely more religious.' It is true. The desire to be at one with God in worship and through submission, the yearning for His supporting hand under trial, for reconciliation with Him when conscience stirs and smites—these are imperishable emotions. Within the range of Jewish experience we see this truth exemplified in the success of the appeal which the Day of Atonement makes year after year to the seemingly indifferent heart. And this is but one illustration of a fact that is universal. Beneath the callous exterior the springs of religious feeling lie strong, though still; the mystic tie that binds the soul to its Divine source is never broken. And, under ever-changing manifestations, religion will continue to exist because it answers to a fundamental instinct and an unquenchable need of the human spirit.

FAITH

'For the Lord hath comforted Zion; He hath comforted all her waste places, and hath made her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.'—ISAIAH li. 3.

THIS consoling message is addressed by the prophet to his fellow exiles in Babylon. It is a wondrous picture which he draws for them, one that taxes their faith to the utmost. Fast caught, as they seem to be, in the net of captivity, deliverance is to be theirs—is already on the way. Jerusalem, a ruin for many a year, shall rise from her ashes, joyous and beautiful once more; her wilderness shall be like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord. It is hard to believe; but it is true. It seems a miracle that is promised; but it will assuredly be wrought. For He that will perform it is the great wonder-worker, God.

The prophet's message of hope to his dejected people is verified year after year for us in this glad Springtide. The ancient miracle is being repeated at this moment before our eyes: the wilderness is made like Eden, and the desert

like the garden of the Lord. Where, a few weeks ago, death seemed to hold court, life reigns supreme. The trees, lately so bare and gaunt, are outlined in a delicate tracery of verdure. Their leaves seem like speech, the utterance of their joy in the touch that has set them free; they are a very 'garment of praise.' And—so close is the kinship between Nature and men—we ourselves catch the glad contagion. A subtle sympathy makes us sharers of the earth's happiness, fills us with a sense of freedom, banishes the winter that chilled our hearts, inspires us with new hopes, new energies new life.

What is the lesson that we are thus taught? Is it not the lesson of faith? Those old Babylonian captives—to what instinct of theirs but faith did the prophet appeal when he painted the picture of a regenerate Zion? And of what but faith does the new world unlocked within and without us by the Spring discourse to us in its eloquent message? A month or two ago, when the hand of Winter still held us in its relentless grip, we had but to dream of the Spring and be comforted. We bore up against the searching blasts because we knew that kindly zephyrs would one day rout them with gentle prowess. The gloom of the dark days was tempered to us by the thought of the sunshine that was on its way to flood the earth The

ailing in body and spirit carried their load of pain the more bravely because their gaze was fixed on the coming of the year's one enchanted season. Here was faith working in every heart, even in hearts that deemed they had lost it. The Spring had come year after year ; it would assuredly come again, and again, and yet again. The promise of Nature, so wondrous, so miraculous, would be redeemed. She had never failed us in the past ; she would not fail us now.

This certitude is what we call faith. It is the conviction that the unwritten compact made with the human soul by the unseen Power behind the universe will be fulfilled to the letter. It is the conviction that our most deeply-seated hopes—those which are our very breath of life—are not doomed to disappointment. It is the conviction that joy is ultimately to replace sorrow, and rectitude triumph over sin,

> that good shall fall,
> At last, far off, at last, to all,
> And every winter change to spring.

This is the subject-matter of faith, and it is of its essence that it shall be cherished in the teeth of contradiction, when our experiences or our surroundings shriek against the creed. At a time when Zion was never so desolate the Jewish captives are bidden to believe that soon it will be a smiling garden. We

ourselves believe that the Spring will make an Eden of the wilderness, and hold to the belief never so firmly as when the storm smites and sears the earth and the snow wraps it in a winding-sheet. When all other sources of certainty fail us, faith, the gift of God, comes with its marvellous whispers. And what it whispers proves true; it is the opposing voices that show themselves false.

Why should we not venture on the wider induction? This faith, which justifies itself alike to the Babylonian exiles and to the captives of the Winter — shall it not bring its gracious influence to bear upon the daily life? God does not fail us in the Springtime; why should we not be certain that He will *never* fail us? He lives and reigns; there is no throb of human anguish that He does not share, not one brave deed that He does not requite, not one wrong that He will not redress, not one calamity that He will not transform into blessing. Why should we not think so? It may be hard to do it when all the sin and agony of the world are against us, when the seething volcano and the terrifying earthquake deal widespread devastation and death. But ruined Zion was built up again, and Nature perpetually renews her youth; why, then, should the world's captivity endure, or its Winter have no Spring? The same Hand works in both sets of phenomena. There

are order and faithfulness in the one case; surely there must be order and faithfulness in the other. Trusting God in some things, shall we not trust Him in all?

It will profit us to do so. In faith—faith in the Unseen, in eternal justice and goodness—to set against the sombre facts of every day experience, lies the secret of all happiness, all worthy achievement. 'All the great ages,' says Emerson, 'have been ages of belief. I mean when there was any extraordinary power of performance, when great national movements began, when arts appeared, when heroes existed, when poems were made, the human soul was in earnest and had fixed its thoughts on spiritual verities with as strict a grasp as that of the hands on the sword, or the pencil or the trowel.' It is true. If the world is sick to-day, if mediocrity rules, if there is a want of grip and decision, a want of inspiration, discernible in the various departments of human effort, it is because this is not one of the ages of faith. How can men accomplish great things when the mainspring of greatness is lacking? To do great things one must have faith in oneself, and who can have this that has lost his faith in God? We may trust in our strength and our wisdom; we may deem ourselves all-sufficient for the task we have before us. But the task itself will be meagre, for our motive and aim will be poor. Great

deeds are the fruit of great enthusiasms; and who can know these mighty impulses save those who, upraised by the vision of God, by the consciousness of being His instruments, are lifted out of themselves into a realm of sublime thought and achievement? This, at least, has been the life-story of the world's greatest souls.

Writing to a veteran minister the other day, I remarked on the energy and the capacity for work which he retained in his old age. 'You are Divinely helped, I am certain,' I said. 'Yes,' he replied, 'God helps me every minute.' Faith like that is invincible. Nothing daunts it; nothing is impossible for it. It *must* succeed, for it is itself the one secret of success. 'The Lord God will help me,' cries our prophet,[1] 'therefore have I not been confounded.' Believe that God helps you, and you do wonders; you go in the strength of that spiritual meat forty days and forty nights. Believe that all is for the best, that your troubles are mercifully and wisely ordained, and your sorrow falls from you like an outworn garment. Believe that righteousness must be victorious at last, and you will see it conquering every day of your lives. Its seeming defeats will mean nothing. They will be only the temporary pauses that mark every great triumphant movement.

[1] Isaiah l. 7.

Get faith, then, I say—get faith; it is the one supreme need of humanity, the one condition of the vigorous, the healthy life. We part with it, we dally with it, not only at the peril of our immortal souls, but to the injury of our every day happiness. There is no work so humble, no lot so lowly, that faith will not ennoble and sweeten. Therefore let us have a care that we do not weaken its foundations in any human being, in the young above all. Let us see to it that this Heavenly flower, so fair, so fragile, shall have its congenial atmosphere, that our Education Acts, and all the rest of our training apparatus, shall be so contrived as to foster, not to stunt it. Great indeed is the responsibility of those who lightly help to turn the heart of one single child from its natural hope in God.

But for our own sakes also let us cling to our faith. In ancient days the servant of the man of God, looking out in the early morning, sees the city surrounded by an army come to capture his master. 'Alas,' he cries, 'what shall we do?' 'Fear not,' says the prophet; 'for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.' And he prays 'Lord, open his eyes that he may see.' And the servant sees, and behold a protecting host of horses and chariots of fire is round about the prophet.[1]

[1] 2 Kings vi. 14–17.

Such is the vision vouchsafed to the eye of faith. May it be ours, giving us certitude of a realm greater than this visible world, of a help mightier than human aid, of realities larger and deeper than this little life of ours! For then all our fears and our griefs will pass from us. Our captivity will be at an end; our Spring will have come, with all its miracle. For us, too, the old promise shall be fulfilled:—the wilderness will be 'like Eden, and the desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.'

THE DIVINE SHEPHERD

'The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters.'—PSALM xxiii. 1, 2.

'A SWEET expression of resting faith'—so Cheyne [1] calls this lovely psalm. 'An idyll of the Divine fellowship'—so Duhm,[2] its latest expositor, styles it. Such is the homage which criticism must offer to these sublime outpourings of the religious spirit. This is one of the so-called 'Guest-psalms.' To dwell in the House of the Lord for ever—in that spiritual sanctuary, wider and holier even than the material Temple, which intimate communion with his Divine Host itself has fashioned—is, as the psalmist's final words indicate, his dearest hope, his deepest yearning. But this is only an incidental element of his message. His dominant mood is one of implicit trust in God's goodness, absolute self-surrender to His wise and loving protection. Thus this psalm has

[1] *The Origin of the Psalter*, p. 237.
[2] Marti's *Hand-Commentary*, p. 75.

come to be chosen as the first which the Jewish child is taught to lisp. Every morning he includes in his prayer the sweet words which fix his thoughts upon God as the kind shepherd who suffers not his lambs to want, who feeds them when they are hungry, and gives them rest when they are weary, making them to lie down in green pastures, and leading them beside the still waters. For this is emphatically the child's psalm, the song of the childlike heart, which both in youth and in age abases itself in simple faith and humble submission before its Divine Master.

The conception of God as the good shepherd is essentially Jewish, though at first sight we may not recognize the fact. It is a familiar conception with the Biblical writers. 'O shepherd of Israel'—such is the invocation of the Supreme with which the eightieth psalm opens. And where shall we find a passage more exquisitely beautiful than that in the fortieth chapter of Isaiah where God is described as coming in His might, and as most signally manifesting it in His tender solicitude for His human flock, whom He feeds like a shepherd, gathering the lambs in His arms, and carrying them in His bosom? And the gentle love of God is extended from collective Israel to the individual soul. Nowhere in the Bible is the personal note struck more firmly than in our psalm. God is the shep-

herd, not of Israel only, but of each of His human children, not of the psalmist in his quality of Israel's representative merely, but of the psalmist as a human being dominated by all the elementary needs and hopes and longings of humanity. And, strange to say, it is in a very early chapter of the Bible that we find this figure of the shepherd used in circumstances that clearly prove its purely personal significance. Jacob, at the point of death, calls upon God, who has been 'his shepherd all his life long,' to bless the children who stand by his bedside.[1] He has known the joy of the Divine protection, the delight of resting upon the arm of a mighty and loving God. What boons more precious can he invoke to crown these youthful lives ?

Such modes of speech and thought are, I say, essentially Jewish. If they strike some of us as unfamiliar, if they recall the ideas and the phraseology of another religion, it can only be, I fear, because too many of us have ceased to share the spirituality of those great souls of our people with whom they originated ages ago. It is not Judaism that lacks these sublime conceptions and these beautiful methods of expressing them. It is the modern Jew, who has all but ceased to recognize them as his own. Let us be sure that any attempt to infuse increased

[1] Genesis xlviii. 15, 16.

spirituality into Judaism is only an attempt to restore it to its ancient beauty, to the exalted shape it took in the consciousness of prophet and psalmist.

The joy of simple faith in the Divine goodness—that is the burden of this psalm. Make yourselves as little children towards the Divine Father; trust yourselves to His sheltering care; submit yourselves to His will; believe that God will give you all that you really need, all that is really good for you to have, that He will keep you from every evil except that one evil, sin, from which no power but your own strong will can save you; school yourselves to think that supreme wisdom rules your lives, and that whatever happens to you is the decree of unalterable love—this is the psalm's message.

It is a familiar lesson, but one that mankind never seems to outgrow. On the contrary, the older the world becomes, the greater is its need of the simple verities that formed the spiritual aliment of past generations. For to-day we are trying more and more to live without God; and, losing Him, we lose our hope and all the sustaining force that helps us to bear the burden of life. Keen observers bewail again and again the sadness that characterizes the age. The pain of the world has entered like iron into men's souls. They have plenty of gaiety, but it lacks the true ring. And why? Because

they have lost their faith in eternal love, because they have parted with that belief in the kindly power mercifully directing human destiny which upbore their fathers. In other words they have lost the Hebraic temper—the temper of the psalmists. To the Hebrew the tragedy of life was real enough. No one had a quicker feeling for it. How could he help feeling it seeing that it was embodied in him as in a microcosm? What distinguished him was his power to resist the despair with which it threatened him. And this power he owed to his faith. A living religion kept his mind sweet and sane and hopeful. He knew only too well all the pain of the world, but he trusted in God, and that pain became transformed into a supremely beneficent ordinance. And so while he witnessed and suffered it, he could feel an infinite content, an infinite peace. The hand that chastened him was still the hand of the compassionate shepherd, who was ever making him, despite his sorrows—by means of their redemptive power—lie down in green pastures, and leading him beside the still waters. Darkness might settle on his life, he might walk through the valley of the shadow of death, yet would he fear no evil, for God was with him, and under the transfiguring influence of that Divine companionship misfortune lost its sting, its very name.

If the world is to recover its old cheerful serenity, it must go back to the ancient paths. It must get hold again of its vanished faith. It must get hold of God. There is no other way. The godless life is a life of despair. Without belief in the Divine Shepherd the world is a purposeless chaos or, worse still, an organized cruelty. The agony of the living, the death of the dead, become maddening problems. Virtue fades away into an illusion, duty into an empty sound. And with the moral life the foundations of human society are broken up. And therefore, unless humanity is to make utter shipwreck, we must return to the old childlike trust, the old invigorating ideals of the Hebrew Bible. Unpractical as the lesson seems, it is in truth the only practical one.

And the joy of it! The joy of knowing that all the cruelty of fate is deceptive, that there is a God and that 'we are the sheep of His hand,' that a pitying heart throbs behind all this stern and impassive universe. What rapture to lie down in the green pastures, to be led beside the still waters, to feel the firm and gentle hand guiding and guarding us amid the pitfalls of life, to find rest and refreshment for the overladen spirit weary with the burden of care and grief and disappointment! Where is the soul that the prospect does not allure? 'I shall not want,' confidently cries the trusting heart. Who

shall deride its confidence ? Is it not justified ? We trust nowadays in the ' arm of flesh '—in bodily strength and energy, in cleverness, in wealth. How frail these supports are, the experience of every day only too eloquently testifies. Far wiser are they who are cast in the psalmist's mould. From them God withholds no good thing. In the midst of want they lack nothing, for their needs are higher than the world can supply ; and God will provide. Poverty may overtake them, but He will make them rich with the inestimable treasures of His storehouse. Sickness and suffering may lay hold of them, but He will put gladness in their heart far surpassing the ' gladness of those whose corn and wine are increased.'

And all this joy, which no power can filch from us, may be ours if we will only pay the price, if we will only give God the trust He asks of us. For the shepherd implies a flock—submissive hearts that suffer themselves to be tended—and only those can know the true riches of life, only those can experience the happiness of being led and upheld by the wise and unfaltering hand, who surrender themselves utterly to the Divine keeping.

A difficult thing you will say, and truly say. For the childlike temper is given to us in unequal measure. And yet in some measure it is given to us all. We were all children once ;

the child's instinctive trust was ours. Shall the world rob us of it utterly ? Shall we not cultivate what still remains of it—strive with all our might to preserve, as our most precious possession, those oases of the soul where grows all that is best and sweetest in us ? Shallow minds may call us simple—decry us as dreamers. No matter. We shall have what they have missed—real peace, not the semblance of it. We shall be masters of our fate. We shall force this hard and barren life to yield us its hidden, its real joys. The Lord will be our shepherd ; we shall not want. For us the green pastures when the world around is a waste. For us the still waters when the world is seething turmoil.

The beloved sister[1] whose mortal part has been consigned to the grave during the past week, had reached this ideal state, with all its attendant blessedness. Her life was a living psalm. Absolute trust in the Divine goodness, perfect self-surrender to the Divine will, were its characteristics and its message. In this new age she kept alive the beautiful traditions of the inspired singers of the ancient world. And so she was the ideal Jewess. With ardent love for the ancestral religion and zealous championship of its distinctive creed, she united that

[1] Lady Simon.

deep spiritual temper which has ever distinguished the great ones of her race. God was very real to her. She lived in that constant communion with Him which was the psalmist's deepest joy. Her life was faith. From her implicit reliance upon God she drew all the mingled strength and sweetness of her character. In sorrow it upheld her; in joy it kept her lowly. Towards all men it filled her heart with loving-kindness. And when the end drew near, only to bring with it dire weakness and suffering, it inspired her with noble fortitude and resignation. Such a life is infinitely more convincing than a thousand sermons. It is the most eloquent witness to the matchless beauty, the unique happiness, with which religion rewards those who are true to her. This saintly woman won the homage of all hearts—won it by her gentleness and serenity—won it by her very faith. And by that faith she triumphed over sorrow. This world could not harm her, for her soul was elsewhere, high above its reach. And so in her darkest hour she had light; when pain racked her she could say 'I am content.' Could there possibly be a more striking demonstration of the power of faith, of the vanity of the sordid things in which we are apt to put our trust? A life such as hers calls us back to God as with a trumpet's voice. It shows us how little we are, how great we may be. It

leads us in thought beyond the valley of the shadow into that region of the blest where the real life, begun here in every noble thought, in every act of self-surrender, shall broaden out into the full and glorious life. Ah, may we yield ourselves to its mighty inspiration! May she who has gone before still draw us on towards that serene realm of faith and aspiration where lies our true sphere both here and hereafter! Amen.

UNDER THE DIVINE WINGS

'How precious is Thy love, O Lord. In the shadow of Thy wings do the race of men find refuge. They feast upon the choice delights of Thy house, and of the river of Thy pleasures Thou givest them to drink. For with Thee is the fountain of life; in Thy light do we see light.' —PSALM xxxvi. 7–9.

THIS is one of the most pregnant, as well as the most sublime, utterances of the Psalter. It would require many sermons to do justice to the striking thoughts it expresses—thoughts which introduce us to a domain of the Biblical theology as exalted as it is unfamiliar. In one brief discourse I must permit myself but the humblest aim. I can only hope to bring out some of the more salient ideas of the text, and so to throw however feeble a light upon an important phase of the Psalmist's religion.

And first a word about a word. I have ventured to use the expression 'love' in my translation of the opening sentence of the text:—'How precious is Thy love, O Lord.' The Hebrew original is *chesed*—here translated in the English Version, with some attempt at accuracy, by 'loving-kindness.' But elsewhere

in the Bible it is too often rendered by such inadequate expressions as 'mercy' or even 'kindness.' There is only one English equivalent for the Hebrew word *chesed*; it is the word 'love.' You may translate it by 'loving-kindness' if you please; but why we should hesitate to use the simpler, more expressive and more beautiful word 'love', I know not. Even Professor Cheyne, who has some strange theory according to which *chesed* means what he calls 'duteous love'—not the spontaneous, overflowing sentiment, but action, mechanically springing from conscious faithfulness to a bond or covenant—even Professor Cheyne admits that if we translate the word simply by 'love', we shall not be very far from the truth.[1]

And it is not without good reason that I dwell upon the meaning of a mere word. It is a commonplace of Christian polemics to affirm that the love preached by the New Testament is, in all its height and breadth and depth, a sealed book to the writers of the Old. The love that God feels for His human creatures, the love those creatures ought to feel for Him, we are often told, falls far short of perfection in the Hebrew Scriptures. For the full efflorescence of this Divine concept we must look, it is said, to a later dispensation. Never was there a more

[1] *The Origin of the Psalter*, p. 378.

groundless assertion. It is refuted by that most familiar of all Biblical precepts :—' Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might ' —a precept which bids the Israelite make his entire being one in love of the one God. Our psalmist's cry refutes it. ' How precious,' he exclaims, ' is Thy love, O Lord—Thine all-protecting love—in which the race of men find refuge, even as a bird finds rest and safety beneath its mother's wing ! ' No image could more beautifully or more powerfully express the depth of the Divine love for the lowly child of clay. It is infinite. It is, as the psalmist himself declares, high as heaven ; it is wide as life. No human being is too remote to be reached by it, too sinful to count upon it, too miserable to find solace and repose and security in its sheltering embrace. No human being, I say. The phrase is not a hairsbreadth too wide. For note the psalmist's language :—' in the shadow of Thy wings do the race of men find refuge.' The race of men ! There are no artificial limitations here. Israel is not mentioned. For the psalmist has lost sight of the boundary-lines that divide nations and religions. He has soared into that serene atmosphere which racial disputes and theological differences are alike powerless to disturb. He feels those leapings of the soul towards its

Divine source that make the whole world kin. All men are his spiritual brothers. All feel, however unequally, the same yearnings after God, the same need to lay life's burden down at His feet for awhile ere they go their way again, the same need of a heart to rest on, of a compassionate ear into which to pour their troubles. And just as the need is universal, so too is the coveted boon. Not for the chosen people alone is God's love, with all the joy that flows from it, but for every soul that longs for it and seeks it earnestly. It is the whole race of men that may, and do, find refuge in the shadow of the Divine wings.

And so the text is one of those great catholic utterances that come now and again in the Hebrew Scriptures to prove that the Israelite could at times forget Israel, and fix his thoughts upon the vaster congregation of humanity to which he belonged. They are utterances that spring out of the singer's inmost soul. For the moment he is the interpreter of humanity itself.

But other wonders of the text wait for us. The children of men have found God, and rest upon His love ; and now the psalmist goes on to pourtray the joys that reward them. ' They feast,' he cries, ' upon the choice delights of Thy house, and of the river of Thy pleasures Thou givest them to drink. For with Thee is

the fountain of life ; in Thy light do we see light.' It is necessarily a vague picture, and yet sufficiently definite to make it clear that the happiness of which the poet sings is purely spiritual. The rare delights upon which the seekers after God so rapturously feast, the stream of the Divine pleasures at which they slake their noble thirst, must necessarily be the food and drink of the *soul*. No thought of carnal or worldly pleasure intrudes to mar the beauty of the vision. But whence do these higher joys proceed ? What is the avenue to them ? How does mortal man attain in this life to a bliss that anticipates heaven itself ? The answer is, through communion with the Highest. These sons of men, stricken yet trusting, sorrowing yet aspiring, 'faint yet pursuing,' come to find refuge under the wings of God. Their fluttering hearts would be stilled by contact with the Universal Heart. And so there comes to them the unutterable peace for which they yearn. It comes to them through the sense of the Divine nearness. The bird finds rest and security under its mother's wings. Whence the magic of that physical contact ? Who shall tell ? And in like manner the bruised heart of man comes to abide under the shadow of the Almighty ; the human child feels about him the arms of the Divine Father, and knows that all is well—feels all those recent fears,

those racking griefs, merged in an infinite confidence and content. Whence this magic too ? Again, who shall tell ? And yet the solace and the peace are real, like all the facts of the spiritual life. They can no more be gainsaid than the wondrous quiet that stills the throbbing heart of the nestling bird.

It is from spiritual contact with the Supreme that the nameless delights spring of which the psalmist speaks. And now we understand the reference to God's ' house ' which at first seems so irrelevant. The joys which the text depicts have the sanctuary for their scene. The trusting soul feasts upon the delectable things of God's house ; all its happiness comes to it as the result of communion with the Divine. But here a great truth is to be noted. This ' house,' of which the psalmist speaks—can it be the sanctuary in Jerusalem ? Can it be a material sanctuary ? Or is it not rather a house which hands have never built, a spiritual temple which no human power has fashioned, save the mighty forces that dwell in each man's soul ? And so we are face to face with one of the most wonderful conceptions of the Biblical religion. The psalmists could picture to themselves a sanctuary transcending in beauty even the fane which crowned the hill of Zion, a sanctuary which should be ' a covert from the storm, a shadow from the heat,' and to dwell in which

all the days of their life was their one desire, their one prayer. It is the sanctuary which each of us may build out of his own best aspirations—those aspirations which bring God down to us, and enable us to walk with Him hand in hand throughout our pilgrimage. It is a sanctuary as wide as earth, for each man carries it with him in his own soul, and in it is enshrined for each man, be he Israelite or Gentile, poor or wealthy, learned or ignorant, the living God, the fountain of the higher life.

It is a fascinating thought, and none the less fascinating because this old-world poet, this ancient seer, in the truest sense of the world, conceived it. Nor did he stand alone in picturing it. The Jewish mystics of a later age beheld it too. To this very day the pious Jew, on wrapping himself each morning in his *talith*, his praying-shawl, previous to approaching God in worship, repeats the verses of the text. He himself may not know why, but the saintly men that preceded him knew. For them the robe they wrapped about them was the emblem of the great spiritual temple in which prayer and communion were about to enclose them. They carried their imagination further still, as the medieval literature clearly proves. The spiritual sanctuary which they saw with the eye of the soul was as wide not merely as earth, but as heaven. It stretched beyond this life

into the life hereafter. God's house was as vast as eternity; the river of His pleasures flowed into the boundless region of the blest; the light that shone upon the spirit in worship would deepen in God's good time into the unquenchable radiance of Paradise.[1]

And can we doubt that, for the psalmist, too, it meant all this? 'In Thy light,' he cries, 'do we see light.' Just as the house whose joys he paints was never built by the hands of men, so the light of which he tells is 'the light that never was on sea or land.' It is the light that streams from the Divine soul to the human, from the spirit of the great Redeemer to the lowly spirit that essays to worship Him. It is the light of truth and hope and gladness, which will keep us on our way here, to greet us when our eyes, sealed in the last sleep, shall open again to a glorious and unending dawn.

[1] See, for example, the *Reshith Chochmah*, iv. 4 and 6.

INCURABLE !

I WENT the other day to the Home for Jewish Incurables. My visit left in my mind an inevitable sadness ; but it also stirred some consolatory thoughts, which perhaps I may not inappropriately express to you now.

My visit, as I have said, necessarily saddened me. Human misery is always painful to witness or even to think of ; but misery for which there is no remedy is truly heartbreaking. The legend that Dante's fancy wrote above the gates of Hades, ' All hope abandon, ye who enter here,' might almost be inscribed outside this house. Incurable !—the word is terrible. Those of whom it is spoken know that there is no hope for them on this side of the grave. The wide heavens hold no sun that may raise again with vivifying beam these bruised human blossoms. Each day as it dawns brings to millions who toil and grieve the promise of happier things ; to these stricken ones it promises nothing—nothing but the nearer approach of the inevitable end. And yet some of them were truly blossoms once ; they had health and hope and joy ;

some, when they were little children, brought light into their homes, even as your children when they came to you, brought light into yours. One poor girl is named Welcome, a name that pathetically tells of the glad expectancy with which fond hearts greeted her advent into the world—but how sadly inappropriate the name has proved!

But I must not pursue this train of thought. If my aim were to stir your feelings it were easy enough to accomplish it, for your hearts are pitiful and the story is brimful of tears. What I would do now is to show you that there are some redeeming features even in this moving spectacle of human misery, that there are mitigating circumstances in a situation which at first sight seems all wretchedness and despair. And, first, it is possible to discern something sweet and gracious even in this House where suffering rules triumphant. The natural instinct of almost every mind is to shrink in repulsion from the spectacle of hopeless disease—from the sight of the pinched feature, the stunted frames, the palsied limbs of its victims. And yet it is not all ugliness. All this uncomeliness begets and nurtures a beauty of its own, just as the dark earth yields and feeds many a bright flower. It is not the horrible beauty that a spurious art affects to discern in decay itself, like unto the iridescent film that clothes the

stagnant pool. It is God's own beauty—the beauty of moral health—which, by a wondrous paradox, springs out of physical sickness, and transfigures it. If you want examples of heroism in these prosaic days, you need not wait until a war breaks out, and nerves the devoted soldier to frenzied gallantry at the cannon's mouth. Nor need you search for them in some unfamiliar spot, far removed from the highway of every-day experience. They are to be found almost at your very door, even in the very homes of some of you. Here, at any rate—here in this meeting-place of God's stricken creatures, lowly as they are in station, commonplace and uneventful as their lives may have been—you may find abundant illustration of the brave endurance of which human hearts are capable. With what fine fortitude do they bear their hard lot ! They know that they have nothing on this earth to hope for ; they know that for them one day must be just like another, presenting the same grey monotony of weakness and pain—all twilight, like the netherworld of the ancients—and still they are patient and resigned and even cheerful. They do not cry out because their load is heavy ; they do not impeach the justice of a dispensation that has doomed them to incurable wretchedness while so many of their fellow-creatures, whose very voices reach them from the street outside, are revelling in the joy

of life. This is heroism indeed, and it is heroism which is not confined to them, but repeats itself in not a few lives that are passed elsewhere than in a Home for Incurables.

Many a time as we walk abroad we meet a face that tells the same noble story—a face on which trouble has left deep traces, but endurance and victory footprints deeper still. Doubtless some of you are accustomed to scan such faces as they pass by, and to piece out their touching history. Now and again you meet some one whose story needs no interpretation —it is so obvious—an old man, perhaps, bowed and broken with his years, yet literally carrying his heavy load as the only means of earning the bread he scorns to beg for, or some brave girl going forth to her work, thinly clad, in the early morning of a bitter winter's day, when ease and comfort and fine raiment might be hers if only she would forget the meaning of virtue. Do you not know indeed of examples among your own acquaintances ? Do you not know of those who in all their trials have never lost their integrity, who submit to the chastening hand of God without repining, who go their way and do their work making no sign, but, like the Spartan boy in the ancient tale, sternly hiding the anguish which is gnawing at their hearts ? Do you not know of those whom sorrow has bruised, but who have overcome it at

last, of those who have loved and lost, and yet have clung gratefully to what has been left them, of those who have found some heart worthless for which they have sacrificed themselves, and yet have retained their trust in human goodness, of those who drag the heavy chain of ceaseless suffering, and yet cheer and encourage those about them, yet look up into God's face with a patient smile ?

Why do I remind you of all this ? Not merely to tell you how wonderful human nature is, for that you know right well, but rather to bring home to you, what we are all more apt to forget, how good God is. This heroism of afflicted men and women, whence does it come but from Him ? He has made it, with the souls it inhabits and glorifies. Let us thank Him for it ; let us bow in adoration before the goodness that has made it possible. Let us rejoice in this powerful witness to the Divine lovableness. For truly God must be at least as noble as the highest among humanity. And shall not the thought of human heroism lift a corner of the veil that hides the Divine rectitude from mortal gaze ? Pain will be for ever a mystery, until death, the greatest of mysteries, makes all things clear. But is not the problem lightened when we think of pain as a discipline, nay, when we see it *acting* as a discipline daily and hourly ? The germ of moral strength in many a nature

is often quickened, like some dormant bud in the Springtime, by the rough winds of trouble, by a rainstorm of tears. But for these it might have remained dormant to the end. If human life is God's scheme for bringing each soul nearer to perfection, surely suffering is one of the instruments of His purpose—suffering, which is the blessed parent of patience and sweetness and sympathy.

And notice in passing that these virtues are not begotten or developed in the stricken ones only. Pain and grief have a twofold educational effect. The sufferer's agony challenges all that is most beautiful in a score of other hearts to show itself. His affliction gives him insight, teaches him to feel, perhaps for the first time, another's woe, unseals in him an unsuspected spring of gentleness, endows him suddenly with the power to endure ; but it also becomes the one needed force that casts some other character into a final mould of nobility, that turns the stream of some other life into a fixed channel of unselfish effort. The very existence of an institution like this Home for Incurables is a living testimony to the power of suffering to evoke human beneficence in its widest and most gracious form, to effect that ennoblement of joyous hearts whom joy might have spoilt. To visit such an institution is to meet not only with those that are ' afflicted of God and smit-

ten,' but with them too whom God has blessed, blessed with health and youth and happiness, but blessed most of all with that gift of sympathy which the need of their sorrowing fellow-creatures has summoned forth in its fullest splendour. Ah ! my brethren, I rejoice to think that there are such blessed ones—such messengers of mercy—among our own congregation, and that this synagogue of ours has supplied the impulse to their holy ministrations.

The visit I am describing awakened yet other thoughts in my mind. I have spoken of the wondrous patience with which these poor men and women bear their lot. And wondrous it is indeed ! If to us, who are well and strong, the thought should come that perhaps a visitation like unto theirs might one day overtake us, what should we say ? Should we not cry, 'Ah, I could not bear it. If I knew that I was never to be well again, my interest in life would be utterly quenched. I should not have another happy moment.' But these stricken lives would prove us utterly wrong. They are far from being wholly dark, entirely broken. They show no trace of that settled despair which we should have expected to find them exhibiting. The passion of grief, if it has ever raged, has burnt itself out. Not even the ashes of it remain. A wonderful calm reigns in these sorely-tried men and women. They accept their lot,

and instead of brooding upon its sadness, upon its irrevocableness, are able to fix their minds upon other things—upon the hundred trivial incidents, perhaps, that make up the routine of their daily lives, or upon the compassion that breaks its monotony, or upon the Heaven, at once so near and so far, where their maimed lives are to be made whole and beautiful at last. Whatever the objects in which their thoughts are centred, it is certain that they yield relief and solace, that some wondrous power of resistance is granted to the sufferers, that they are not entirely given over as play-things to the evil forces of their destiny.

> Their resolve
> Upbears them, and firm faith and evermore
> Prayer from a living source within the will,
> And beating up thro' all the bitter world,
> Like fountains of sweet water in the sea,
> Keep each a living soul.

Are we wrong in seeing in this power to forget and to conquer their affliction the Divine handiwork ? Is not God's mercy manifesting itself even amid all the sadness of their lives ? Is it not He who is supporting them on the couch of languishing, who maketh all their bed in their sickness, who redeems them lovingly from going down to the pit of despair ? In all their affliction does He not vouchsafe to them a peace which is at once the foretaste and the pledge of

a future and an ampler joy ? Moreover, is there not mercy lying deep down beneath the crust of all life's seeming cruelty, mercy whose exuberant tide so often pierces and floods it ? Is there not a beating Heart behind the soulless phenomena of the universe ? Does not the self-same Hand wound and heal ; and are not both the healing and the hurt wrought in wisdom, in truest pity ? Ah ! you incurable ones whom no asylum shelters—you whose sickness is of the mind rather than of the body—you who carry about with you the scars of a lifelong sorrow—do you learn your lesson from these souls whom the hand of God hath touched. They are 'afflicted and storm-tossed,' [1] but unlike her of whom the prophet was speaking, they are comforted ; for the word 'incurable' has no place in God's vocabulary. Be you comforted, then, in your turn. God's love has not deserted the heavens because the clouds hide it from your gaze. It was shining even in that fateful hour when night settled down on your life ; it is shining now, lifting you into light and warmth, though you hardly know it yet. That love is calling to you at this moment—calling to you through my unworthy lips, its humble messenger, seeing that the very message is a witness to its own truth, a token of the

[1] Isaiah liv. 2.

reality of the goodness it proclaims, and which alone has made it possible. It is calling to you now, bidding you gather the chastened joys that spring up about you, so that from them you may build up anew the fabric of your life's happiness. And you who belong to another category, you who by God's mercy have been spared all heavy sorrow—do you learn that hard lesson of patience under your small trials which they that are heavy-laden learn so easily. You feel the crumpled roseleaf, and it tortures you. You chafe and fret at the sting of petty troubles. You cry out that God is not merciful, not just, because, having bestowed so much upon you, He has withheld the one gift upon which you have set your hearts. Ah! hush your complaints, be impatient no longer. Be taught by those who have only too abundant cause for sorrow to think of the blessings you have, not of those you are denied. Think, too, of the anguish which no human hands, however deft and loving, can altogether banish, of the hurt for which there is no remedy but death, and then on your knees thank God that you have been spared so pitiable a fate, that you are strong and well, that for you the song of the birds retains its full charm, that for you the flowers still wear their brightest raiment, that for you life still calls with a thousand sweet voices, with eloquent promises of coming joy.

IDEALS

'And see that thou make them after their pattern which hath been shewn thee on the Mount.'—EXODUS xxv. 40.

WHEN Moses went up to God on Sinai he received the Commandments, but also the pattern of the Tabernacle; for great as is the life of duty, great also is worship and all the other symbols that serve to express that life. The pattern of the Tabernacle, the Rabbins say,[1] was shown to Moses in an image or model of fire. To each man a like heavenly illumination is vouchsafed. Each of us has his moments of exaltation in which, turning his back upon this lower world, with its paltry aims and its meagre standards, he climbs the sacred mount, and permits a nobler vision to light up his soul. This is what we mean when we speak of the Ideal. It is something at once our own, and not our own. It is born of ourselves, and yet springs from a source outside us. Quite apart from this everyday life of ours, it is something which

[1] Menachoth, 29a.

we would weave into that life and make it glorious. It is both visionary and real. We know it to be the stuff that dreams are made of, and yet we go on cherishing it, and shall never cease to cherish it while we ourselves exist. The same Voice that led the Lawgiver to the solitary mountain-top leads us. The same Hand that traced for him the pattern of the golden Sanctuary shows us a picture of a golden day which is to dawn for us or for others. All the world's greatest men have seen the vision—prophet, philanthropist, saviour of society ; the sight of it and the effort to realize it have together made their greatness. But the meanest of us share the vision with them. The world is going to be better than it is. *We* are going to be better. There is a Messianic age lying somewhere in the future, which shall redress the injustice, rout the sorrows, banish the pain that darken this age. There is an ideal beauty, comparable to that cherished by the artist and the poet, an ideal moral beauty lying for us all somewhere in the heart of things, which we are to incarnate in our own lives. It is at once our despair and our hope, the source alike of our agony and our joy. Against it we measure ourselves, and know that we are pitifully small ; but allured and inspired by it, we take heart of grace and struggle on, trusting to grow more and more into its perfect likeness.

Every man, I say, is an idealist, however crude. Even the pessimist is one. For the difference between him and the optimist is not the possession or the lack of an ideal, but the submission to it or the revolt from it, the resolve or the refusal to trust it and to walk in its light. The pessimist has his dreams of a better order of things ; but for him, to his unfeigned sorrow, they are always doomed to be dreams. Evil, he thinks, is too ingrained in human destiny to be ever uprooted. The lowliest of us, too, have their ideals. The best is yet to be. The downtrodden Russian Jew, living amid squalid surroundings, hugs his vision of joys yet to come—to come for others, if not for himself. His race is not always to be the butt of oppression ; the image of a regenerated Jerusalem is written on his heart. He himself may be despised, untaught, unblest, but his children will have a happier fate, and if not they, his children's children. Wonderful it is to think of these dreams glorifying the ghetto, redeeming its narrow, toilsome life from utter sordidness, transfiguring it as with a magician's wand. More wonderful still it is to think of this idealism gilding all human life, lifting it to heights greater than itself, imparting to it a tinge of the divine. If there is any witness to God in mundane affairs, it lies in this power of mortal mind to rise above its environment and to project

itself into scenes upon which the eye of the flesh has never gazed. Surely it is the Divine finger that thus beckons us onwards, showing the road, promising the goal.

Religion, we know, is itself idealism ; it is belief in perfect goodness and the attempt to realize it in the individual life. It is, as Emerson says, ' the attitude of those who see that, against all appearances, the nature of things works for truth and right for ever.' But the very existence of the ideal in the human breast is in itself a testimony to the essential truth of all religion, to the existence of a Power that is for ever blessing men by leading them upwards. Thus it is its own best proof. The religious idealist has a vision of God, and its very wondrousness proclaims Him, declares the vision to be true. God blesses men by teaching them to dream. For what would have been the course of the world's history if men had been content to walk, or rather to crawl, on this solid earth, if they had never climbed the mount and seen the glittering model of the Sanctuary ? The earth would have been all but desolate, man a savage. There would have been neither art nor science, neither religion nor morals. In place of human society there would have been a horde of ravening animals. Man has become what he is only by getting outside and above himself. We eat and drink ; we work ; we

take our pleasure. This, we think, is life. We are wrong. Life is what we dream of, and hope and long for. It is not what we touch and see ; it is what we can never touch, for it is always eluding us. It is not lived here on these lower plains, but on the heights, where the golden pattern is shown us in all its uplifting and sustaining beauty. In the prophetic words,[1] ' By these things men live and wholly therein is the life of the spirit.'

It is strange that this should be so, that we prosaic creatures, as we fondly deem ourselves, should have our real being in an imaginary world. For, in a sense, it is imaginary. Just as to-morrow never comes, so the ideal is never overtaken. Strain after it as we may, it is always beyond us. Like mountaineers, we scale one crag only to find other heights revealed to us. But this is the eternal and gracious law, which ensures the continuity of the onward march of progress. ' Man never is, but always to be blest.' Let him think that all the potentialities of well-being are exhausted, and though he may have climbed high, he will soon sink into apathy and wretchedness. No ; wisely has it been ordained that there shall always be one virgin peak, one height unscaled. Even the Tabernacle, I doubt not, fell short, in its

[1] Isaiah xxxviii. 16.

actual realization, of the pattern shown to Moses; for how shall what is pure Heavenly be reproduced on earth? But this is no reason for desisting from our attempt to mix with the earthly as much as possible of the Heavenly. 'The better we may reach, though not the best; but no one ever found the better that did not aim at the best. To the mathematician the perfect circle is always ideal; the truest circle he can draw is always proximate. Yet had he no ideal circle, his actual one would be far more incomplete.' It is so in every department of life. The perfect picture will never be painted, the perfect piece of mechanism never be contrived, the perfect man never be born. But the thought of them, the dream of them, will still inspire the painter and the engineer and the seeker after God. Once they cease to dream, their work will deteriorate and die. Let us go on dreaming, then, if we would be men of action! That lesson is impressed upon us by every line of Israel's history. No people has furnished a larger contingent to the ranks of the world's idealists, the men who have lived on the solitary heights, alone with God, so that they might the better live among men and bless them! It is not only what they have seen, but the very fact of their seeing, that makes their usefulness and their glory. They have shown us the way; they have taught us

to dream after them—taught us to 'trust the larger hope,' to seek after the best that we know, and to be content with no lower seeking. And we must carry on the gracious doctrine, and seek to inspire others in our turn. The one characteristic task of the Jew to-day is to feed the vestal fire of the Ideal, to keep the torch of the higher truth and the higher life steadily burning. The lesson may have a strange sound, seeing that the distinctive Jewish quality is commonly said to be materialism. But it is so described because the world's opinion takes its cue from the worst of us. Let us, who deem ourselves the better element, neutralize that influence by the irresistible force of our own example. Let us see to it that our own lives, and the lives we help to fashion, justify and compel a worthier judgment.

But let us remember, too, that though the ideal is never reached, it never wholly disappoints. It is no illusory and deceptive will-o'-the-wisp; it is real, and its promises are fulfilled at last, though not always in the exact form in which they are made. The dreamers of the world have triumphed, if not in their own time, at least in ages after them. The Prophets have been stoned, but their hopes are finding an ever louder echo in the human soul. On the very spot where Bruno was burnt as a heretic his statue stands to-day. Spinoza was

banned ; he is hailed as the father of modern philosophic thought. And so it is always. The dreamer of yesterday is the teacher of to-day.

> Men counted him a dreamer. Dreams
> Are but the light of clearer skies—
> Too dazzling for our naked eyes.
> And when we catch their flashing beams,
> We turn aside and call them dreams.
> Oh ! trust me, every thought that yet
> In greatness rose and sorrow set,
> That Time to ripening glory nurst,
> Was called an ' idle dream ' at first.

The ideal is always true, always the real. Shall we not learn the practical lesson thus taught us ? ' See that thou make them after their pattern, which has been shewn thee on the Mount.' It is a call to make our dreams true ; let us obey it. There is a domain outside and above this little life of ours ; let us try to realize it, to grasp it in thought, to bring it down so that it may impart something of its beauty to the material world we live in. What treasures there are in that wondrous land ! There is joy for our sorrowing fellow-men, there is healing for their woes, there is knowledge for the untaught, salvation for the erring, greater moral strength for ourselves. It is a veritable garden of the Lord, lovelier and truer than many a picture that has been given us of Paradise. It

is our kingdom, the heritage of the meanest; let us arise and take possession of it, for therein alone is the fountain of happiness for all God's children.

THE CITY OF THE LORD

'And they shall call thee the City of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.'—ISAIAH lx. 14.

THE summer is past and the autumn well on its way. Our holiday is ended. We have exchanged the peaceful, gracious country-side for the busy city. If Nature, in her most winning aspects, can be eloquent—eloquent of God and duty—as, I hope, some of us have lately found, shall not the town have also its impressive message for the receptive soul?

Of beauty, such as we have lately been enjoying, the city holds but little. It stands for the very antithesis of the splendour and the charm and the joy that are associated with Nature. Not within its confines shall we look for the delight with which the sight of the swinging sea or the fruitful plain or the everlasting hills fills the heart. And yet even the close and dusky city is not devoid of a beauty all its own. I speak not of those open spaces, happily to be found even in this crowded London of ours, where the trees still remember to put on their green mantle in the springtime and

their russet-robe in the autumn, and whence the wondrous panorama of the skies may be viewed by day and night. What I refer to is the beauty that is inherent in cities, as such. The very elements which the country does not contain, and which would go far to rob it of its rural character—the surging, shifting crowd, making new combinations every moment as in some mighty kaleidoscope, the eagerness on each face, the exuberant life betokened by the entire scene—this has a charm for the least impressionable eye. The very thought, moreover, that here in the town the world's pulse beats fully, here the world's work is chiefly done, here its noblest as well as its largest achievements are accomplished—is itself a joy. To look on this mighty torrent of life is delightful; to commit oneself to it, to be part of it, to be an item, however humble, in that great mass of struggling, toiling, aspiring humanity, to feel that one is doing something, however little, to swell the sum-total of the world's riches —material, artistic, intellectual—to contribute to its stock of well-being, even though the first step be the attainment of one's own welfare—this is rapture. And town-life offers that rapture to us, and because it offers it, it is something to thank God for. One could almost have wished that the Rabbins had given additional proof of their insight by instituting a

special benediction for the pleasure. Certainly they knew how to appreciate the magnificence of a city like Rome, and they ordained a blessing to be recited when one sees a rare specimen of the human race. Why not a blessing on seeing a crowd ?

The lesson I would emphasize is eminently practical. There are those who are apt to look back regretfully upon their summer holiday, to bewail the loss of the green fields and the eager air and the sun-lit heavens. To them it seems a hard fate to leave these sources of delight for the murky atmosphere and the narrow streets and the long, monotonous rows of dingy houses, to exchange the sense of room —room for body and spirit—that blesses the sojourner in the country, for the sense of imprisonment. But let them be wise, and they will hush their lament. They will see that the contrast between the country and the town is not all to the town's disadvantage. They will see that both have their beauties, and confer their boons, that the ancient promise even to-day is fulfilled to those who deserve it, and men are blessed in the city no less than in the field.

Yes, even upon the town does God's benediction rest, despite its bitter toil and its wearing anxieties, its misery and its squalor. ' God made the country and man made the town '—

so runs Cowper's familiar line; but it is true only in part. Even the city has God made, in the sense of willing its existence, and approving of it. He loves that men should dwell together in their multitudes; for from their contact, from their very conflict, issues the spark that kindles the world's happiness. For the vice and the wretchedness that seem the inseparable companions of great communities He is not responsible; they are not His handiwork, but that of the men who have trampled on His wholesome laws. But still the city, the corporate life, with its outflow of blessings for the race, its healthy rivalry in work and well-doing, its attendant feeling of solidarity which makes one man answerable for the goodness and the happiness of his fellows, its civic sense which prompts the individual to unstinted and unselfish service in behalf of the public—this is as truly of God as all the splendour of the country-side is of God.

And so let not men grieve, but rather rejoice, that their lot is cast in the town. Let them confess that their lines are fallen in pleasant places, and that theirs is a goodly heritage. For to them is given the joy of sharing in that strenuous drama for which cities provide the stage. But to them, too, is given the still greater joy of sharing in those efforts to bless humanity which find in cities their centre and their source.

They may, if they choose, take part in the task, never-ending, never-ceasing, of purging the town of its darker elements of sin and suffering, of transforming it, of redeeming it. If lately the charm of the country has soothed them and brought them forgetfulness of care, now the very ugliness of the town may challenge them to arise and turn it into beauty. If moved by benign Nature's appeal, their thoughts have been lately led to God, so now they may be urged by the cry that goes up day after day from the dark places around them to seek for Him in the very effort to hush that bitter lament.

The task is difficult enough to daunt the boldest. Ignorance and brutality and vice seem ingrained in the life of great communities. It was so in ancient times when prophets like him who spoke the words of our text thundered even against Jerusalem, God's own city, crowned with God's own sanctuary, and denounced it as a 'faithless city,' as a 'city of blood.' And yet never did these preachers despair. The fallen daughter of Zion would rise again from her moral and spiritual ruin. Once more should she be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city; her walls should be called salvation, her gates praise. The rectitude of her indwellers should save her. Her officers should be peace, and her task-

masters righteousness. Zion should be redeemed—redeemed by the justice and the integrity of her penitents. The glowing vision, doubtless, was never fully realized, and perhaps no one knew better than the seers themselves how far it was from complete fulfilment; how hard it was to change the brass into gold and the iron into silver; how impossible, save as the elements of a beautiful dream, was the imaginary fabric of Israel's life, with its foundations of sapphires and its pinnacles of rubies. And yet they went on dreaming and hoping. They were content to dream, to hope, for they knew that, however extravagant the vision, it contained in itself the promise of its own fulfilment. Let them but infect others with their passionate, roseate belief, and it would be half-way to accomplishment!

And so it must ever be, even in a city less holy than Zion. This gaunt, teeming London of ours is also dear to God, as Jerusalem was of old. Its woe and wickedness call to Him for healing, and He wills that the cry should be answered. What we have to do is to believe it, to have faith that in God's good time the veil of thick darkness that covers this great metropolis shall be rent, and the radiance of a sweeter, a happier, a fuller life enwrap it at last.

Let us believe it, I say; for to believe it is to work for it. The pessimist is condemned

to inactivity by his dreary creed ; he does his best or worst to realize his assertions as to the inevitableness of human misery. It is only the optimist—that is, the religionist—who labours to eradicate the evils that afflict his fellow-men. And so let us be optimists, and hope for the dawn of better days, when the plague-spots, physical and moral, that disfigure and poison our large cities, shall have disappeared. For the hope will be a challenge, which our best energies will take up. We shall feel impelled to prove our hopes true, to enrol ourselves, though but as humble privates, in the glorious army that is fighting disease, and ignorance, and sin in their most impregnable strongholds.

This, then, is the chief thought with which we may take up anew the threads of our worldly work. Instead of regretting the sweet-scented fields or the surging sea, let us rather rejoice that we are free once more to labour for our fellow-men. To that work let us consecrate ourselves. If we have been selfish hitherto, concentrating our energies upon the attainment of our own ends, or if we have been idle, content to drift aimlessly down the stream, let us be so no longer. The sufferings of a whole city call to us—and its cry has gone up to Heaven. Shall we not, inspired by ancient and noble example, plead for this seething

mass of humanity with God—stand between it and its doom with the best of all appeals—the self-sacrificing effort to remedy its woes? The work is gigantic; but each individual's share of it is small. Let each of us take his portion—that which is indicated by his opportunities and his powers. Let each of us vow to bring his cupful of help which will go to the making of an ocean of blessing, to do his best by pure living and helpful service to save this city of ours, and win for it the name of the City of the Lord.

THE CONFLICT OF DUTIES

'And he himself passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times until he came near to his brother.'—GENESIS xxxiii. 3.

IF these genuflexions, these demonstrations of humility, strike us as excessive, we must remember that Jacob was an Oriental. What seems extravagant and fulsome to the Western mind is often sober and in good taste, judged by Eastern standards. But there is a deeper question involved which cannot be settled so easily. Some of us think that they discern a certain weakness in Jacob's character, and perceive a signal illustration of it in the incident recorded in the text. Jacob, we say, lacks courage, both moral and physical. He shirks difficulties rather than faces them; he gains his ends by tricks and stratagems instead of trying to compass them by brave and sturdy endeavour. And in justification of our view we point to various passages in his life, to his exploiting first of his brother's need, and then of his father's blindness, and finally to his attempt on this occasion to buy off Esau's enmity

with presents and 'whispered humbleness,' instead of standing up against him like a man. There is some truth in this view, but not the whole truth. Jacob has his faults ; but a want of courage is scarcely one of them. The man who can defy a whole crowd of shepherds in order to help a solitary maiden, who can toil laboriously year after year without wage, upborne only by the thought of the woman he loves, is surely no coward or weakling. And as to the incident before us, is he really to be blamed for trying to disarm his brother's animosity instead of actively resisting it ? Is it not rather to be accounted unto him for righteousness ? He has women and children under his charge, upon whom his hostile attitude may easily bring down the weight of Esau's vengeance. Would he have been justified in imperilling the lives of these innocent and defenceless people ? And then, besides this, there is the duty of conciliation itself—the duty of overcoming hatred with love, which, incumbent as it is upon a man in every circumstance, is especially due from a man to his brother. Is there any one here who would not have acted as Jacob did ? To do otherwise would be not a virtue, but a crime.

It is an instructive incident. By scarcely any stretch of fancy can we think of the actual situation in which Jacob found himself

as being reproduced in our own experiences. We are never likely to be called upon to choose between the warlike attitude that may jeopardize the lives of wife and children, and the yielding policy that will probably save them. But the same type of conditions may and does present itself to us again and again. Many a time we have to decide between *seeming* courageous and *being* it. Pride tells us to maintain our rights which some antagonist threatens. Shall that man trample upon them without let or hindrance? No, we cry; it would be sheer weakness to stand aside and let him have his evil way. Let us oppose our hostility to his. Or something better than pride speaks to us—something that looks like principle. I have opinions to uphold—opinions that are very dear to me. Shall I show myself invertebrate, and hide them, or renounce them, at the dictation of other men? No; it would be arrant cowardice to do so. So we argue; and there are times doubtless when such a temper is right and praiseworthy. But there are also occasions when the very opposite attitude is the correct one. There are times when we cannot insist upon our rights without doing more harm than the sacrifice of them would involve. Think of Shylock and his pound of flesh. The court allows it; it is his, legally. Shall he enforce his right and slay his debtor? Or shall he not

submit to be nobly vanquished by the power of mercy ? It is an extreme illustration, but an apposite one. A man owes us money, and will not pay. To do nothing is not only to lose the money, but to know the rankling sense of defeat. It looks like weakness. But the man is poor, and pressure means ruin for him, misery for his wife and little ones. Shall we not say that forbearance is the better part here ? One of my earliest acquaintances was a Jewess of the most old-fashioned type. Her extreme orthodoxy showed itself, among other things, in that delicate feeling for human distress, that self-abnegation, exhortations to which constitute some of the finest elements of Rabbinic Judaism. Her son had lent a sum of money to a struggling man who had neglected to repay it long after the stipulated time had passed. He took counsel on the matter with his mother, and she expressly enjoined him not even to remind the man of his debt ! He obeyed ; he forfeited his rights. But he gained something far more precious. Men may have called him weak ; in heaven they found a different verdict.

Or take the other case I have suggested. We have cherished opinions, sacred principles, which we burn to uphold. But to uphold them means to endanger interests more precious and more sacred still. Have we the right to jeopar-

dise those interests by fighting for our opinions through thick and thin ? To yield is to be charged with servility, to be branded as a selfish time-server. But can there be any question that to yield is the right, nay, the truly courageous course to take ? To insist that our opinions shall prevail simply because they are ours, and without taking into account all the issues involved,is not courage, but the obstinacy which is very like weakness. They are the brave and the strong who can forgo their own personal victory, so that others, or some bigger cause, may triumph. I was reading the other day a tale [1] about two men, one strong in every respect, the second as weak. The strong man has the other altogether at his mercy. By crushing him he can rise to the social heights upon which he has set his heart. The temptation is sore ; but after a desperate conflict with his lower nature the good in him gains the day. ' Strength,' he says, ' is something more than the trampling of others into the dust that we ourselves may have a clear road. It is something much harder and much less triumphant than that. It is the standing aside to let somebody else pass on.' It is well said. Whenever we efface ourselves so that something better than self may come by its own, declining vic-

[1] *John Chilcote, M.P.*, by Mrs. Thurston.

tories, putting from us valued opportunities, not out of our weakness, but out of our strength, then we manifest a courage and a heroism which cannot be surpassed by any effort in the whole range of moral achievement. The David who spares Saul when he has him in his power is greater than the David who confronts Goliath.

And all the more heroic is it because in addition to the self-sacrifice essentially demanded, there is also needed a certain indifference to misrepresentation. Our strength may be deemed weakness by a shortsighted world. Just because we have made the sacrifice we may be accused of lacking the one quality that has made it possible. It requires a high order of courage to bear this ordeal. One of the most powerful stories I ever read is the story [1] of a man who, by reason of his known moral and physical valour, is plainly designated by public opinion to lead the detachment of volunteers from his village on the outbreak of the American civil war. But to the general surprise and consternation he declines to serve. He will not fight. He is of course denounced and shunned as a coward. But later the truth comes out. His aged mother is deeply attached to him, and to leave her is to kill her. Long and fiercely does he wrestle with himself; but finally he

[1] *The Gospel Writ in Steel*, by Arthur Paterson.

decides to stay at home. The determination to face the gibes and sneers of his neighbours far transcends the courage needed to go to battle.

These trials of strength are the story of our lives from year to year. If duty were merely sailing by a plain chart, it would be a comparatively easy affair. But there are difficulties to be overcome of which the chart tells us nothing. There are rocks and shoals unmarked; there are cross-currents and contrary winds. All have to be taken into account in the momentous navigation of life. It is seldom the duties that baffle us; it is the conflict of them. 'Be manly,' says one voice to Jacob; 'think of the women and children,' says another. He has to listen to both voices, and, like a judge, to decide between them. And we have to do the same, again and again. Look back, if only on the past week, and you will see, I am sure, that you have had to go through this conflict; you have known what it is to have to adjudicate between two opposing influences, both worthy in themselves. It is the hardest part of our moral task. All honour, then, to those who face the difficulty, and do their best to resolve it. On the one hand there is human suffering and the call to assuage it; on the other, the duty of strengthening our brother's power of self-help. On the one hand there is truth, with

its sacred mandates ; on the other, the welfare of those whom the truth may injure. Love on the one side, justice on the other ; independence and self-respect on the one side, gentleness and consideration and patience on the other. Who does not know the problem and its perplexities ? But, hard as that problem is, let us do our best to solve it according to our lights. More we cannot do ; less we dare not. We cannot be sure of reaching the right solution ; but we can see to it that we seek the solution honestly and with single mind, aiming only at the good, not what is merely our own good. Jacob, in his great crisis, decides for conciliation and against resistance. He would save his defenceless folk. But himself he does not spare. He goes on in advance to bear the brunt of Esau's anger. He is brave, then, when he seems weakest. And we, in our turn, have only to discard self in order to show that we are truly strong in the hour of moral conflict. By the mere onlooker we may be condemned, but because we have not sought our own ease or satisfaction or pleasure we are justified in the sight of conscience, vindicated in the sight of God.

TWO GOLDEN PRECEPTS

'When thou dost lend thy neighbour any manner of loan, thou shalt not go into his house to fetch his pledge. Thou shalt stand without, and the man to whom thou dost lend shall bring forth the pledge without unto thee. Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates. In his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it: lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee. DEUTERONOMY xxiv. 10–15.

THESE commands are among the gems of the Pentateuch. They breathe a tender compassion which suffices to redeem the Mosaic Law from the reputation for severity which certain theologians are so anxious to fasten upon it. The duty here set forth is something else than strict justice, something milder and gentler. The lender of money has certainly the right to his pledge. But, the Law reminds us, there are conditions in which the enforcement of that right would be a grievous wrong. 'Exact thy pledge,' it says, 'but without harshness. When thou goest to fetch it thou must on no account

enter the house; stand without, like a suppliant, and let the borrower bring it to thee. Thou art his creditor, but do not lord it over him; he is thy debtor, but do nothing that may make the thought yet more bitter.' And so with the second part of the text. The wages of the hired servant must not be withheld even for a single night, but paid as soon as the day's work is done. The sun is not to go down with this duty unperformed. Why? Because, so says the Law, because the man is poor, and he has set his heart upon getting the money, and to disappoint him were cruel. That is the point. The master might say, 'What difference can it make if I put off paying till to-morrow, or the next day, or the next?' It does make a great difference, we are told. The man may not need to use his wage at once; and yet because he has set his heart upon receiving it he must have it. Something more than the money is due to him; that something is regard for his natural feelings. For observe that the duty is to be performed towards all men without distinction, whether they 'be of thy brethren or of thy strangers that are within thy gates.'

Thus the Law leads us into unfamiliar byways of goodness. Promulgated many centuries ago, it commends to us a class of duties which only too successfully evade performance even in these days. The *letter* of the moral

bond—that we are prepared to carry out. We will be just and honest and upright. What we fail to recognize is that, when we have been all this, there is still something over—a whole realm of obligation which as yet we have ignored. There is still the *spirit* of the bond, elusive perhaps, but none the less imperious, none the less binding. And that spirit is loving-kindness. Justice—yes, but let mercy season it; rectitude—yes, but let gentle consideration humanize it. In a word, let us pay the debt of righteousness in such a way as to satisfy not only cold, abstract, impersonal principle, but the beating heart of the human claimant.

The duty, I say, is one that is too often overlooked. It belongs to the minor moralities, like the duty of forgiveness, of kindly judgment, of avoiding tale-bearing, and like them is huddled away into some obscure, neglected corner of our minds. To spare the feelings of others, as distinct from being just to them, or even kind to them in the ordinary sense of the term—how few keep this before them as a clear-cut obligation! Who thinks of standing without when demanding his pledge, or of paying the hireling's wage on the day it is earned? Who thinks of pressing his rightful claims in considerate fashion, with moderation of manner, and tone, and speech? Who thinks of doing charity with the delicacy enjoined by the Rab-

bins,[1] in such wise, that is to say, as neither to put the recipient to shame nor to increase the sufficient bitterness of poverty ? Who thinks of doing this or that merely because a fellow-creature has set his heart upon it, and disappointment will hurt him ? Very few, I fear.

And this disregard of the wants and the hopes of others shows itself again and again in every-day life. Let me give a striking, because homely example. There are many excellent people who seem positively incapable of answering letters speedily. They intend to send an answer, and do send it after a time. But they fail to realize the inconvenience and discomfort to which they often subject their correspondent. He may be poor, and have ' set his heart ' upon receiving a reply to his appeal. But he has to wait long for it, and all the while is eating out his soul in suspense. Or he is not poor, but the matter is important, and while the reply tarries he knows not what to do, what to think. He does not even know whether his letter has not miscarried. It is all only want of thought, but is it not a species of cruelty as well ? And yet those who inflict it may be some of the most tender-hearted people in the world.

Nor is this unkindness only passive. It has its active forms. Think of the cruelties per-

[1] Shabbath, 104a.

petrated every day by well-meaning persons through inconsiderate speech and behaviour. Rough words often leave a sting, though none may be intended, and want of courtesy will make a sensitive heart sore for many an hour. 'Thou shalt not vex thy neighbour,' cries the Law [1]—yes, say the Rabbins, not even by incautious words.[2] And they give examples. If a man has had the misfortune of having a relative executed, beware of asking him to hang up something for you.[3] It is a half-humorous exaggeration, of course, but it expresses aptly enough that sensitive shrinking from the infliction of mental pain which the Rabbins have as their ideal. More serious is the warning that to a man who has sinned, and reformed, we must be careful to say not one word that will remind him of his past transgressions.[4] Again, it is related of a Rabbi of very moderate attainments that he was much troubled by the searching questions of his disciples—questions he was often unable to answer. In his perplexity he prayed to God not to suffer him to be put to a confusion so humiliating. One of his disciples happened to overhear the prayer, and thereupon registered a resolve never to embarrass his master by asking him another question.[5]

[1] Levit. xxv.17. [2] B. Metsia, 58b. [3] ibid. 59b.
[4] ibid. 58b. [5] Taanith, 9b.

Let us take these examples as types of right conduct, and strive to conform to them in our own lives. Words that wound, say the Rabbins,[1] are the worst form of oppression ; and the maxim is worth thinking about. There are people who have a positive talent for saying disagreeable things. They do not mean to say them ; they blunder into them. But they hurt nevertheless. Nor is it enough to say the right thing ; the right manner of saying it is what we have also to seek after. You may order a servant to perform a task in such a tone as will make him hate it—and you ; or again in such a tone as will bind him to you in gratitude for the joy your gentleness has given him. You may say Yes to a poor suppliant, and the word may be a blow ; you may say No to him, and make him your debtor.

You may urge, perhaps, that if a mere word or the way of saying it hurts, it is the fault of people for being so sensitive. But no, it is our fault for not remembering the fact that they are thus sensitive, and reckoning with it. All the mischief, all the sin, lies there. The borrower in our text, it might be said, ought not to mind whether his creditor enters his house or not when demanding his pledge ; the hired servant ought not to have set his heart upon

[1] B. Metsia 58b.

getting his wage before the sun goes down. Such susceptibilities are very tiresome. So they are ; but as long as human nature exists it will always be thus tiresome ; it will always have such tender places in its nervous organization which the lightest act or word will set tingling. What we have to do is to spare the sensitive spots. And we ought to do it all the more readily because we have them ourselves.

And this consideration for others is at the root of every truly beautiful character. Many a definition has been given of the word gentleman—that name ' defamed by every charlatan, and soiled with all ignoble use.' Good breeding, culture, refinement, honour—these are some of the qualities it is said to denote. But I question whether tender regard for the feelings of others is not a more vital constituent still. To see, as by a second sight, into another's heart, to feel by a wondrous telepathy its painful throbs, to know what will wound it and what heal, what will cast it down and what uplift it—this is the mark of the true gentleman and, for the matter of that, of the true lady too ; and you may have all the other ingredients, all the education and the refinement and the polish, but if you lack this you have not the exact product that the world admires. Do you remember the story of Elisha and the sorrowing woman ? Her child lies dead ; and hastening after the pro-

phet, she throws herself before him in mute entreaty and clasps his feet. His servant Gehazi, narrow and unfeeling, thinks only of the dignity of his master, outraged by so familiar an act. He would thrust her away. But the Man of God, with the insight which is part of his equipment, forbids it. 'Let her alone,' he says, 'for her soul is vexed within her.' And so she takes courage and unburdens herself of her grief. Elisha has just the quality of which I am speaking. He knows without a word from this poor woman that she is suffering; and what is his dignity, what are his rights, compared with the task of bringing relief to a breaking heart?

Shall we not take to ourselves the lesson, simple though it is? These lowly charities—what little things they are, and yet how great! They cost nothing, and yet they enrich humanity. There are hungry hearts about us, under our own roof-tree perhaps—hearts we clasp to our own every day. They hunger for pity, for consideration, for loving-kindness; they ask for a gentle word or an encouraging smile, for just one thought for their ache, just one sigh for their need. Ah, shall that simple request go unheeded by us—by us who are so kind and tender in other and more familiar ways? No, we will strive to understand their need, to feel their pain; we will treat them gently and

thoughtfully, bearing with their weakness, their fancies, even their ill-temper. We will not stand on our rights in our dealings with them. We will be considerate and yielding like the creditor in the text ; we will stand without and not assert ourselves. They shall have all the sympathy they ask for, because they have set their heart upon it. Not a day shall pass without this debt of loving-kindness being duly paid. The sun shall not go down and find the gracious wages withheld—the wages of love with which we seek to requite the love we ourselves enjoy. And the blessing we thus shed around us shall come back and reward us in our turn. It shall plead for us in heaven. For the old promise will be fulfilled :—' It shall be righteousness unto thee before the Lord thy God.' [1]

[1] Deut. xxiv. 13.

LEANNESS OF SOUL

'He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul.' PSALM cvi. 15.

THE incident to which the psalmist alludes is the familiar one recorded in the Book of Numbers. The Israelites, dissatisfied with the manna, clamour for flesh. In answer to their cry come the quails; but, with them, come pestilence and death. The people have succeeded, and failed. They have their desire, but not the joys they hoped to get with it. The psalmist expresses the thought in striking language: 'They lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. And He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul.'

'Leanness into their soul'—the words may be understood to mean the emptiness of dissatisfaction, the starved sense of the disappointed. These Israelites have been hungering for the grosser food that shall better pamper their bodies than the manna has done; but, when it is given to them, they hunger still. Is it not always thus? Discontent is never cured

by the boon it sighs for. It is exactly like that unhealthy physical craving which springs from some deep-seated disease. Eating may still it for a moment; it will cease altogether only when the disease itself has passed away. And so the dissatisfied heart can never be entirely appeased by the attainment of its desire; for the roots of its dissatisfaction lie, not in outward circumstances, but in itself. And no change in outward circumstances, only a change in itself, will put an end to its discontent. Let us heed the lesson. We cry out for something new, for some relief from the burden of life, from its cares, from its monotony. Only let our prayer be granted, we think, and we shall be happy. Never was there a greater mistake. Let the change we long for come, and we shall be no better off. The old hunger will return; the leanness of soul will remain. Yes, will remain; for it has been there all the time. All our dissatisfaction, all our complaints, have sprung from it. If the ancient people had not been lean of soul already, they would not have lusted for the fleshpots. And so if we would be happy, we must look within rather than without. If we would have a brighter life, we must take the life we have and, by patience, by courage, by thought and love for others, transform it into the ideal lot upon which we have set our hearts.

There is another truth to be learnt from the text. The lusting people have their desire, but have it to their own hurt. Far happier would they have been without it. Surely a useful warning for us all. We long for some fancied blessing—toil for it, scheme for it, pray for it—and when, despite our efforts, it is denied us, we impeach fate or God. 'Why are things so contrary, so unjust?' we cry. 'Why is the one thing refused me that would fill my cup to the brim?' And then of a sudden the refusal is withdrawn, and our request is given to us. But are our expectations realized? No; somehow the boon that looked so desirable afar off loses its glamour in the having. That which was to have completed our well-being fails to feed us; it leaves us lean and unsatisfied. The amount we had figured out to ourselves as sufficient, as wealth, is given to us to the last penny; but the fate of Midas overtakes us, and we learn how surely the touch of gold can destroy the old simple joys. Or there is the particular rung in the social ladder we have sought so long to reach; we gain it only to know new cares, to taste the bitterness of disillusion. And so on through a host of examples. Shall we not follow a more excellent way? Seeing that we know not the things that make for our own happiness, would it not be wiser to leave the matter in God's hands?

Would it not be wiser to hush our complaints and believe that it is only mercy that denies us our heart's desire? 'Bend our will to Thine'—so we are taught to pray every morning of our lives. Let us throw all our fervour into the prayer. For the cheerful acceptance of God's ordinances is the one secret of well-being. To repine is to invite the Nemesis that gives us our request, and with it sends leanness into the soul.

But the text may have a deeper significance than that which we have discerned in it. The psalmist may have been thinking of the spiritual deterioration which is so often the price paid for sordid joys. 'He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul.' The Israelites have the fleshly delights they lusted after; but they enjoy them at the expense of their higher nature. Physically they are fed; spiritually they starve, and starve as a consequence of that lower gratification. Thus the text hints at a notable truth, one that is exemplified by every-day experience. How often does it happen that the lower life crowds out and destroys the higher, even as the noisome weed slowly sucks up the nutriment of the delicate flower growing by its side, and at last kills its more fragile companion! The starvation of the intellect and the spirit often dates from the day when a man's request is given to him, when his earthly hopes

have reached fulfilment. I have in my mind's eye a man who when a youth was animated by a lofty idealism ; he cherished literary ambitions ; he had no little poetic feeling. But one day he was caught in the net of finance. Money-making cast its spell upon him, and the desire for it grew by slow degrees until it became his master-passion. And so all his youthful dreams and his finer sensibilities perished. Probably he has proved more capable as a financier than he could have been as a poet. But the point is that the lower aspirations have ruined the higher, so that it is impossible to recognize in this prosperous worldling the budding author of former days. It is sad to think of the evils that the pursuit of wealth—itself legitimate enough under ordinary circumstances—has to answer for.

Nor is it only the intellectual life that it blights. Often it breeds selfishness and an incapacity to realize the woes of poverty—the very woes to which it ought to be the effective antidote. A man may leap from penury to affluence almost at a bound ; does he carry with him the memory of his former privations and its attendant sympathy for the poor and the miserable ? Sometimes yes ; but sometimes no. Too often the past is forgotten, and those who are most deaf to the cry of the hungry are the men who have once known enforced

hunger themselves. They get their request; they get the wealth they desire, but with it there comes leanness into their soul. And it is they, and not the poor, who are injured most. For what greater calamity can there be than that of the man whose sympathies are denied their rightful nourishment, who knows not the exquisite joy of relieving human need, who has not the consciousness of being a partner with God in His gracious task of blessing mankind to sweeten and to sanctify his prosperity? Such persons are indeed to be pitied. For, gifted with 'the abundance of all things,' they lack the one essential that alone can transform them into blessing.

Then, finally, there is sensual pleasure, the example most closely akin to the malady which afflicted the Israelites of old. That too kills the nobler instincts, deadens the capacity for spiritual experience. It kills even the capacity for work. There have been gifted men—artists, men of letters—with a great career before them, who have given themselves to the lower life, and as the result have destroyed their chances by a self-indulgence that has paralysed their powers, drained the springs of inspiration and achievement. For the soul takes a stern revenge upon him who refuses its claims. It visits his sin upon him by striking at the very energies he holds most

precious. Since he surrenders himself to ignoble pleasures the pure delights of artistic success are denied him. One thinks of Samson, betrayed by Delilah, going forth to exert his strength as of old, ignorant that he is utterly weak and helpless seeing that God has departed from him.

The lesson is for us all. We are asked not for entire renunciation—that, too, is extreme and one-sided, and therefore to be deprecated—but for moderation, for equity as between the conflicting demands of the physical and the spiritual life. But equity demands that the higher should be put first. What are the claims of the senses measured against the call of the Divine within us? The psalmist warns us against leanness of soul; the prophet paints the joys of the spirit that is fed and nourished:—'Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Hear, and your soul shall live.'[1] 'More life and fuller—that we want,' and it is to be gained only by so using our earthly gifts that they may minister to the growth of our diviner energies.

[1] Isaiah lv. 2, 3.

THE SHELTER OF LOGS

'Better is the life of a poor man under a shelter of logs than sumptuous fare in another man's house.' ECCLESIASTICUS xxix. 22.

THE virtue which the sage here commends to us is the virtue of independence. The Bible was beforehand with him in inculcating it. Abraham, urged by the King of Sodom to keep the spoil which he had recovered in battle, sternly refuses. 'Not even a shoe-latchet will I take,' he cries, 'lest thou say, I have made Abraham rich.'[1] Barzillai declines David's favours, though his previous services give him a claim upon them. 'Wherefore,' he asks, 'should I be a burden unto my lord the King?'[2] Elisha, grateful to the good woman who has befriended him, offers to speak for her to the sovereign. She puts from her the kindly offer. 'I dwell among mine own people,'[3] she replies with simple dignity. And Ben Sira takes up the lesson where the Scriptural teachers leave it. 'My son, lead not a beggar's life; better

[1] Genesis xiv. 23. [2] ii Samuel xix. 35.
[3] ii Kings iv. 13.

it is to die than to beg.' And he continues: 'Better is the life of a poor man under a shelter of logs than sumptuous fare in another man's house.' The Rabbins, too, add their admonition. 'Flay a carcass in the street, and take the wage for it, rather than be beholden to others.' [1] It is to the Rabbins that we owe that fine passage in the grace after meals in which the Jew asks to be spared the dire necessity of dependence upon the help of others for his daily bread. 'Only to Thy hand, O God,' he cries, 'Thy bountiful hand—let me look.'

It is strange, with this robust doctrine thrust, so to speak, upon their attention, that the Jewish poor should seem to be lacking in self-reliance. There is plenty of quiet heroism among them. Many will cover up their poverty and battle with it in secret, dreading nothing so much as the possibility of their need being known. It is a noble trait. If too many are unequal to this fine self-denial, and if—though I am not sure that it is so—they outnumber in proportion the same class of persons among their Christian neighbours, it can only be because the keenness of Jewish compassion and the strength of Jewish solidarity have habituated them unduly to rely upon extraneous aid. Thus does it happen sometimes that

[1] B. Bathra, 110a.

the exercise of one virtue will weaken the foundations of another.

I am preaching, however, not to the poor, but to you. And even for a congregation like this the text has its message. The shelter of logs praised by our sage stands for the things which are ours because we have won them by our own efforts. Independence is the salt of the moral, the happy life. I have known many a young man ruined by having expectations, or by being left a legacy. His fortune has been his misfortune in the worldly sense, and in the moral sense too. Even in its literal significance the text has a warning for people of various social degrees. There are well-to-do paupers who hanker after the sumptuous fare in another man's house, who are not ashamed to cringe or manœuvre for an invitation to dinner or some other entertainment. But I am not thinking of them. It is needless, I am sure, to think of them here. But the spirit that actuates persons of this sort infects many who would scorn their particular behaviour. It shows itself in the tendency, on the one hand, to strain after social advancement, even though its attainment must involve a loss of dignity, and, on the other hand, to attach excessive importance to the personality or the opinions of those above ourselves in the social hierarchy. So great is the power of wealth or success in

these days, so inflated is the respect that is paid to it, that we are apt to forget our own merits when we stand under its shadow. To what undignified shifts will a man not stoop in order to win the smile or the notice of his merely social superiors, of those who, in point of intellect or moral record, are his inferiors! There is something depressing in such a spectacle. How much happier we should be if we kept to our shelter of logs, and how much nobler! Ben Sira draws a graphic and a humorous picture of the discomfiture of the poor man who sponges upon the rich. He is warned that he will have to 'listen to bitter words' from his patron. 'Get out, thou sponger,' he may be told; 'get out of my honourable presence. My brother is come to be my guest; I have need of my house.'[1] And so the poor wretch is shown the door. No less pitiable is the lot of the richer poor who wait upon the smiles of the prosperous, or would wriggle their way to a social level above them. What rebuffs do they not court! To what humiliations do they not expose themselves! How poor and unworthy is all this pushing and contriving and bowing! And all for a mere phantom, for the sumptuous fare which will disappoint when we taste it. Better, far

[1] Ecclus. xxix. 27.

better, the shelter of logs, and the quiet, dignified life lived beneath it. Is it not significant that the punishment of Eli's household is that they shall come, and cringe, and say 'Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priest's offices that I may eat a morsel of bread'? There is scarcely a greater calamity! And yet it is hard to make people see it. We all seem to want a little more backbone in these days. We pay court to success by flattering it and deferring to it. 'Better to die than to beg,' cries Ben Sira, and there are many things besides alms that one cannot beg for without moral loss. That sturdy self-reliance which actuated the great souls of a simpler age is in danger of perishing in these times of keen social struggle. 'I will speak for thee to the king'—how few of those to whom such an offer is made nowadays would return the brave woman's answer, 'I dwell among mine own people'!

But it is not only money, or house-room, or a lift up the social ladder that too many of us do not disdain to accept from others. We borrow their opinions and their principles from them too readily. The man wedded beyond divorce to his own views, the man who is never wrong, is a poor creature. But no less despicable is he who, having formed opinions, has not the courage of them, or adopts them, or

changes them, at the implied bidding of his masters, social or otherwise. The man who will not listen to others is a fool ; the man who listens *only* to others, and never to his own mind and heart, may prove a knave. His character is nigh to tottering. Let us listen, but weigh. 'Our great and most difficult duty,' said a great preacher,[1] 'is to derive constant aid from society without taking its yoke, to receive impulses from our fellow-beings, and yet to act from our own souls'—in a word, to be ourselves. Yes, it is a difficult task, for it demands thought and courage, which are some of the rarest of qualities. And yet all moral excellence hinges upon this higher independence. We cannot improve if we are false to ourselves, if chameleon-like, we borrow our moral hue from our surroundings. There is no guarantee that the hue will be worthy ; our very flabbiness is a danger. This independence of character, I repeat, is hard to exercise because there is nothing that men resent so much in others, when it comes into collision, that is to say, with their own ideas or comfort. The popular man —the man who makes friends, of a sort—the man who makes his way—is the man without opinions. Your 'reasonable' man is the man who agrees with you. 'For noncon-

[1] W. E. Channing : *Works*, I. 383.

formity,' says Emerson truly enough, 'the world whips you with its displeasure.' And yet the world's greatest minds are those who have ever been protesting, who dared to 'be in the right with two or three,' who despised the servility and the inanity that answers Yes with another Yes, and No with another No. Moses might have idled away his life in the snug recesses of an Egyptian palace; he hurled his defiance at it instead. Elijah lashes the sins of the time, though he alone is left of all the prophets of the Lord. Savanarola imitates him in a later, but similar age. Luther nails his thesis to the church-door, and beards the mightiest power on earth. All alike 'spoke, not what men, but what they, thought.' And we smaller people must follow their example, though necessarily at a distance. Having found the truth, as we honestly believe, we must uphold it bravely, not apologizing for it, still less bartering it away for falsehood just because falsehood happens to do duty for the truth with the many or the great.

To us, as Jews, the lesson comes home with especial force. Many years ago a trenchant writer in one of the communal newspapers blamed his brethren for their excessive deference to Christian opinion; the 'Ghetto bend' he styled it. We have learnt part of the lesson in the interval, I think. Servility of a kind is no

longer our defect. On the contrary, Jewish self-assertion in these days needs to be tempered by social self-restraint. But in one of its aspects the homily still holds good. Our championship of our religious principles needs a little more stiffening. We are apt to excuse ourselves to others for our Judaism ; some of us even go to the length, on occasion, of hiding it out of sight. This weak-kneed attitude is a sorry thing. Contrast it with the devoted witness of the ancient Hebrew prophets to their Divine Master ; contrast it with the testimony borne by myriads of Jews—ordinary men and women—who martyred themselves for the faith in the times of the Crusades and the Inquisition ; and you will get the measure of its despicableness. Either we believe in Judaism, or we do not. If we do not, let us say so openly and courageously. But if we do, if Judaism still represents the truth for us, if it still embodies our noblest hopes, still constitutes our rule of life, then let us boldly, though without offence, proclaim its spiritual primacy. For not from other minds ought we to take our convictions, but from the light which is within our own souls, the outflow from Him who is the 'fountain of light.' Nor shall consideration for other minds make us false to the duty we owe to our own principles. We will show ourselves not unworthy of our spiritual forefathers, with

their sublime exclamation, 'I will speak of Thy testimonies before kings, and will not be ashamed.'[1]

[1] Psalm cxix. 46.

OTHER PEOPLE'S JOYS

'And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel.' EXODUS xviii. 9.

THIS joy of Jethro seems to have had a special quality. It was an unselfish joy. It was kindled by the thought not of any good fortune of his own, but of the blessings that had lighted upon others. He rejoiced for all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel. He hears from Moses the thrilling story of the Egyptian redemption. It is a story in which he is but remotely interested. The people who are revelling in the delights of new-found freedom are not his people. And yet Moses' recital fills him with gladness. He rejoices as truly and as deeply as if the deliverance had come to him, and as if it was his life that had been lighted up by its happiness. Nay, it does light up his life. It has come to bless Israel, but his very sympathy with it makes him a partaker of it. Just because he can rejoice with God's people in their hour of success, some of their good fortune fastens itself upon

him. It is the blessed heritage of every good heart!

It is a winsome portrait that is drawn for us of this priest of Midian. He must have been a good man to have such wide sympathies, to be capable of such noble detachment of mind. And I might dwell upon the breadth of view of the old Biblical writers who could conceive of such virtues existing in a representative of a race and a faith alien from their own, and could faithfully set down the conception for the instruction of their readers. And this is only one of many such instances to be found in the Hebrew Scriptures.

But I prefer to keep to the line of thought suggested in my opening words, and would speak of the altruistic joy of which Jethro is so conspicuous an example. It is a subject which moralists either consider insufficiently or neglect altogether. And yet its importance is unquestionable. There is no more trustworthy clue to a man's character than the extent to which he is able to take pleasure in the happiness of other people. 'Teach me,' cries the poet in his famous prayer, 'teach me to feel another's woe'; he might have added 'and another's joys.' For surely that is the finer because the harder achievement of the two. Many a man who melts with pity at a tale of distress is unable to find satisfaction in the

spectacle of another's well-being. The thought of our neighbour's sorrows easily disturbs our serenity; but his joys seldom solace us in our own troubles. The man who said that there is something not altogether displeasing to us in the misfortunes of our friends was a cynic. But the converse reflection has surely some truth in it. It is no libel on human nature to say that there is something not altogether pleasing to us in our friends' good fortune. We resent it as something taken from us. That we ourselves are well-off does not make any real difference. The jealous temper is assuredly not confined to those who have but little. The army of the envious is largely recruited from those who have no valid reason for envy—those who ought to be the last to grudge their neighbour his prosperity, seeing that they have all the elements of well-being in their own lives. It is not the poor, for example, who chiefly envy the rich, but the rich themselves. The poor—perhaps it is the blessed recompense provided for them by a loving God—the poor are more or less contented; they allow their outlook to be largely determined by the limits of their social condition. It is the well-to-do who know the worse torments of jealousy and covetousness. They have a fine house, but their neighbour has a finer one; they have one carriage, he has two. And

so their carriage or their house affords them but scant gratification.

Nor is it only a question of the little more which, because it is denied them, is so much. Too often the man who has abundant sources of joy, countless reasons for thankfulness, in his lot, finds a grievance in the mere fact of his neighbour's happiness. The neighbour may have less to make him happy, but that does not matter. Some good thing has fallen to his share. It is the prophet Nathan's parable over again. His vast flocks and herds do not content the wealthy man. He must have the poor man's ewe lamb too. Ahab, in like manner, must have Naboth's vineyard. The lack of it is the one drop of gall that embitters his royal cup.

Is not this a sore evil ? It is sad to think of the thousands of people who make themselves miserable when they have every reason to be cheerful and glad. God would have us happy. He has never intended this life to be a vale of tears. And to be gratuitously unhappy is surely to offend against His benign ordinance.

But there is another side to the matter. It is a question not only of happiness, but of goodness. In the daily *Amidah* we pray for many boons—for knowledge, wisdom, health—and an old Jewish teacher[1] exhorts us, when we offer

[1] See *Orchoth Tsaddikim*, chap. ix.

up these prayers, to think of others as well as ourselves, yes, even of our enemies. For how, he asks, can a man justly demand these things for himself if in his heart of hearts he does not wish his neighbour also to have them ? And it is true. Where is our title to the divine bounty if we would exclude others from it ? Why should God take pleasure in our well-being when we find none in the well-being of our fellow men ?

Nor does the man of grudging disposition harm himself only. He debases the moral currency ; he lowers the average standard of human excellence ; he lessens the sum-total of sweetness and light in the world. And, conversely, the man of opposite character, the man who, like the old priest of Midian, rejoices in the good of others, is—again like that old priest—a benefactor of mankind. For Jethro helps Israel by his very joy. Because he can feel for them in their happiness, because he can make it his own, he is able to put himself at their standpoint generally—throw himself into their life, busy himself with their affairs, understand their needs, and give sound advice for their government which the great Moses himself is only too glad to take. Is this not true of all such wide-hearted people ? Rejoicing because others are happy, finding in the blessings of others true blessings for themselves, they

help humanity by the addition they make to its stock of goodness; they help it by their example, by the counsel which that example silently gives on the supreme question, how to live nobly. They help it in yet another way. For to rejoice with others is to increase their joy. Who does not find his happiness intensified by the knowledge that a kind heart is sharing it with him?

Such hearts are rare, but they are all the more to be cherished on that account. Only now and again does one meet with a truly generous soul that finds its chief delight in contemplating a blessedness not its own, who forgets its sorrows in thinking of the happiness that others have, is compensated for the joys denied it by the thought that they have at least fallen to the share of some one. Such people, I say, are rare. They are the kings and princes of the earth. Shall we not reverently salute them when we see them, and in the old Rabbinic fashion praise God 'who hath imparted some of His glory to flesh and blood'? For human goodness cannot soar to greater heights. The power so to rise is the hall-mark of the noble soul. Whenever that power is displayed our faith in humanity is restored.

To this true saintliness few of us, perhaps, can attain. But we can approach it. We can atone for many a defect by keeping our sym-

pathies fresh, by leaving a corner of our hearts free so that the joy of the joyous may enter in. Jezebel was devoured by the dogs, but they spared her hands and feet; for, say the Rabbins,[1] she was wont to run after a happy bride and clap her hands for joy. It was her one redeeming virtue.

And surely it is a virtue beautiful to look upon. A few days ago I called on a friend who was in great distress of mind. Herself the victim of many years of physical pain, she was a prey, at the moment, to keen anxiety on account of her aged husband, who was dangerously ill. With the object of diverting her thoughts from her trouble I mentioned that I had just come from visiting a young bridal pair in their new home. I regretted my words as soon as I had spoken them, for it seemed a want of right feeling to speak of those who were just beginning married life to one who was thinking of its end. But, to my relief, my friend said, 'I trust that the young people are happy.' It struck me as a noble-hearted utterance. In the midst of her trouble this good woman could interest herself in those young people whose lot was so different from hers, and hope for their happiness.

Such a temper is blessed indeed. It blesses

[1] Yalkut to ii Kings ix. 35.

because it cheers and uplifts, those who contemplate it. But it blesses, too, those who display it. There is no joy so intense or so abiding as that which has its founts in the joys of others. It is the one consolation to those who mourn, the one source of wealth for those who are poor, the one unquenchable light that shines upon them that sit in darkness. Let us cultivate it, if we love God and man, nay, if we truly and wisely love ourselves.

THE BLESSING IN THE CLUSTER

'Thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it; so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all.' ISAIAH lxv. 8.

THE prophet brings a message of comfort to his people, and he clothes it in a striking parable. He imagines a company of men passing through one of the luxuriant vineyards of Palestine. Tempted by the wealth of fruitage that surrounds them, some of the party would trample it down in sheer wantonness. But a finer spirit among them restrains their violence. He remembers that in the cluster, which the riot of his companions would ruin, is the new wine, or the promise of it. 'Destroy it not,' he says, 'for a blessing is in it. The fruit you would idly destroy may cheer, perhaps, some saddened heart in the coming days. Spare it for its possibilities.'

'And such,' continues the prophet, 'is God's message to you, O my people. You have provoked Him by your rebellion, and you must expiate your sin in suffering; but know that

your punishment will be in measure. God will not wholly cast you off. There is hope for you, the promise of blessing for you, like unto that which is held by the cluster of grapes of which I have spoken. And for your sake, as for theirs, one shall stand forth, and say, "Destroy it not!"

The parable, rather than the prophet's application of it, may usefully engage our thoughts to-day. And the truth it may teach us is the possibility of goodness, of usefulness, of redemption, that resides unremembered or unsuspected in many an unlikely life. The new wine that is concealed in the homely clusters—homely, at least, to the oriental mind accustomed to 'a land of vines and fig-trees and pomegranates'—is the type, not only of the ultimate salvation of backsliding Israel, but of the beauty that lies hidden in many a commonplace and outwardly unlovely character. The prophet's message of hope is addressed, not to his contemporaries alone with their despairing consciousness of sin, but to the human heart in every age. It exhorts us all to trust in our common humanity. It assures us that no man is so utterly lost that God shall not find him one day and lead him back with a touch—no man so utterly given over to the sordid life as to have no moments of secret worship of the morally sublime. For ever a voice says of this

man or that, seemingly so dead to honour, to self-respect, to pity, to love, 'Destroy him not, for, even in him, there is a blessing. "Deliver him from going down to destruction; I have found a ransom."' [1]

And that ransom lies less in what the man is than in what he may be, and will be. The life that appears so useless, so empty, may suddenly exhibit a startling capacity for usefulness, even for greatness. It contains the seed of blessing which a chance wind may breathe upon with its warm breath, and ripen into a gracious flower. The novelist has drawn such a life for us in the story of Sydney Carton—a life without definite aim, a barren life, but one which is redeemed, endowed with a sublime fruitfulness, by the heroic act that ends it. And the picture is true. One can never tell how a man may turn out until he dies. Long years of moral failure may be rescued from the destroyer's grasp—purified, transfigured, by a crowning victory. There is hope in the thought, but a rebuke too. If we are admonished not to lose our faith in men, we are warned not to lose our patience with them. We are apt to turn away angrily from this one or that, to give him up as morally impossible. 'There is no good in him,' we exclaim; 'he is past redemp-

[1] Job xxxiii. 24.

tion. Why waste appeals to his generosity, to his better nature? He is not capable of generous feeling; he has no better nature; it is one dead level of badness. Let him go; to trouble about his regeneration is a waste of time and energy.'

This despairing language is held sometimes even of the young—of the young, who ought to be the very incarnation of our hopes, our optimism. 'That child,' we cry, 'is incorrigible. He has no moral sense; only brute force can move him; kindness is thrown away.' Those who reason thus, good people as they may be, are really aiders and abettors of wrong-doing. They ripen the germ of evil in the character they denounce by their very denunciation, their severity, their pessimism. Deal with a man as if he were irretrievably lost, and lost he will be. He will quickly prove your bad opinion true. Treat a child as though he had no moral sense; be harsh to him rather than just; make him feel that love, in your opinion, is wasted upon him, and it will not be long before he justifies you by proving himself altogether unloving and unlovable. But go on trusting in that seemingly hopeless man, that seemingly incorrigible child. Be godlike in your treatment of him. Bear with him with an invincible patience. Show him that, however heartless, selfish, impervious to pathetic

appeal he may appear, you still can discern or dream of ' the gem of purest ray serene ' lying deep down beneath the turbid waters, and your confidence, your optimism, will become a challenge which he will have to take up at last. Your kind hand-grasp, your word of calm, affectionate expostulation, your kiss of peace will win him for a life of self-conquest, when the blow, the taunt, the frown would only have hardened him into the confirmed sinner you declared him to be. The old Talmudic story is pregnant with meaning. The heathen who goes to Shammai and Hillel in turn with the frivolous request to be taught the law while he stands on one foot, is angrily repulsed by the sterner teacher, but patiently received and instructed by the other. Whereupon he exclaims, ' the harshness of Shammai would have kept me for ever a stranger to the higher life ; Hillel's gentleness has led me into the Divine Presence.' [1] Hillel sees the potential convert, where Shammai discerns only the inane or impertinent questioner. The truer second sight is justified of its fruits.

And it is this clearness of vision that we must all seek after if we would do good, not only to our own souls, but to the souls about us. Nothing must weaken our faith

[1] Shabbath, 31a.

in human goodness ; nothing must rob us of our belief that there is blessing in the cluster, that beneath the unattractive exterior there lurks, after all, something which, with tender handling, will go to the making of the higher man.

But the text has a yet wider application. We may learn from it not only that there is the possibility of good in most men, but that there is *actual* good in them which will grow and expand under generous recognition. ' Destroy it not,' pleads the voice in the parable, ' for a blessing is in it.' And, as of the cluster, so of a character, a warning voice is for ever crying, ' destroy it not with thy withering scorn ; trample not its goodness out of it with thy harsh judgments, for it has virtues of which thy dull fancy dreams not.' And is this a superfluous warning ? How easy it is to read character wrongly ? We are always sitting on the bench solemnly trying one another, and as a rule doing the business very badly. There is but One that can judge righteously, declare the old Rabbins [1]—He with the all-seeing eye, who occupies the heavenly judgment-seat. But we mortals, with our limitations, what can we know of another's real nature ? Of all books the human heart

[1] Aboth iv. 8.

is the hardest to read. Its lore is written in a varying hieroglyphic, to which there can be no certain key. 'Deceitful is the heart above all things,' exclaims the prophet,[1] 'who can know it?' And in the larger sense also the exclamation is true. The heart is deceptive as well as deceitful. Pretending to be dross, it may all the time be a heart of gold. And yet, in spite of all this, we go on trying and condemning each other—for the verdict is usually adverse—as though we were experts, instead of the novices we must always be. Why, you may live with a person for a lifetime, share the same roof, the same lot, the same joys and sorrows, and yet shall you not truly know him to the end. And if this be so, how shall we presume to hold the key to the character of a comparative stranger, and to say of him, 'he is vile'?

The unsoundness of our judgments is demonstrated almost every day. The cluster we despise manifests its blessing again and again. There are men and women who hide their goodness jealously, like a holy of holies, from the gaze of the world. A constitutional reserve, an inexplicable shyness, urges them to concealment. But once there comes some accident or crisis and reveals their secret. A chance word or incident breaks up the fountains of the great

[1] Jeremiah xvii. 9.

deep of being and lets loose its mighty flood. Or sometimes life becomes a mask hiding the real man, and it is only at death that he stands revealed. Ah, what a different being he proves to be from what he has seemed all those long years! That stern exterior has all the time concealed the kindliest disposition. The hand that has been withheld from open charities, from ostentatious benefactions which might have won a cheap applause, has secretly done far worthier deeds of modest and self-sacrificing generosity. The seemingly selfish life has in reality been ennobled by a continuous heroism; and what we thought to be a heart steeped in worldliness has ever had a consecrated corner for God, or has fed on a hallowed memory which has itself been almost a religion. Again and again the wonder of old is repeated, and the homely, unpromising staff blossoms in the hidden sanctuary of each man's inner life more often than we suspect. The flowers and the fruit it bears rejoice but the very few privileged to look upon it. But we of the rank and file who stand outside, can only guess at the wonder that is being wrought within the holy precincts. But let us go on guessing. Let us go on believing the best of each other, however little we may know. Let us believe that each cluster has within it the fragrant wine, with its promise of joy to them that deal with it

tenderly. For the true religious temper is that which sees in the human story the record of a continuous ascent to the angels, and which helps to quicken it by sympathetic recognition and loving encouragement.

CHEERFULNESS

'A merry heart is a good medicine; but a broken spirit drieth up the bones.'—PROVERBS xvii. 22.

CHEERFULNESS is a Jewish virtue. This is a truth which, to some persons, will sound like a truism, to others like a paradox. To us Jews it is so self-evident that its enunciation seems superfluous. We have our literature—the Bible and the Fathers—before us; we have the Jewish character before us; and we know how strongly tinged both Jewish life and teaching are with optimism, with an invincible determination to look upon the bright side of things. On the other hand, those who study Judaism from outside are prone to imagine that its genius is necessarily antagonistic to cheerfulness. How can the Jew, it is argued, be aught but sad, seeing how deeply the iron of persecution has entered into his soul. Judaism, it is further urged, necessarily shares that sombre perception of the sorrowfulness of life which characterizes religion generally. 'For right-down cheeriness,' people are wont to cry, 'commend us to Greek paganism, with its joyous *insouci-*

ance, its dislike of introspection, its sunny smile caught from the bright world it loved.' But this conception of the Hellenic temper is a delusion. The Greeks were by no means proof against melancholy, and a melancholy which was all the more settled because, unlike the Hebrews, they lacked the thought of the Divine love to sustain them under life's burden. On the other hand, though Israel has suffered terribly, he has been saved by a wondrous miracle from that last cruelty of a malignant fate—despair. He has kept his faith in himself, in his star, in his God, in the eventual transfiguration of his griefs ; he has kept, in a word, his cheerfulness. Never has he lost heart. The night has descended on his life, but he has thought of the dawn, and has taken comfort. The darkness has covered the sky, but he has turned from it, and fixed his thoughts on the coming radiance that is to dispel it for ever.

And here we reach an important point of difference between Judaism and Christianity. Christianity finds a mystic beauty in suffering. Judaism, on the other hand, while discerning the uses of pain, has never claimed for it an innate beauty, never taught that it is to be desired for its own sake. The Jew has learned to bear trouble bravely—learnt it in the hard school of adversity, for has he not been ' chosen in the furnace of affliction ' ? Nay—and those

words foreshadow the additional truth—he has learnt even to welcome it, to recognize it as the cleansing fire, as the test of his constancy, as the tempering force that hardens him for the grim fight with his lower self, and that fits him for the joys of the hereafter. But he has never made a cult of sorrow. He has not made it an object of desire, the aim of life, the divine ideal for which he is bound to sacrifice himself.

A tendency to dwell upon the bright, rather than the dark aspect of things, is the characteristic note of the Jewish temper. The text is only one among many aphorisms in the Book of Proverbs that applaud that tendency. 'A merry heart is a good medicine; but a broken spirit drieth up the bones.' Perhaps if we substituted for 'merry' the word 'cheerful' we should get nearer to the true meaning of the maxim. What the wise man intends to praise is not the feather-brained gaiety that springs from sheer indifference, from a reckless 'don't-care' sort of spirit, but the calculated, the heroic cheerfulness of those who, having looked the troubles of life in the face, plumbed them to their lowest depths, reckoned with them, fought them, been bruised by them, still are resolved to be cheery to the end. Such is the temper, at once brave and wise, which this sage commends to us. As usual with the authors of the so-called Wisdom Literature, he

bases his commendation on the very ground of wisdom, of worldly prudence. It *pays*, he tells us, to be cheerful. A merry heart is a good medicine—the best of all medicine; for while it is a specific for all the ills of life, it costs nothing and is not nauseous—which cannot be said of ordinary physic. Keep a merry heart, he says, for it will keep *you* well—well even in body; for to be cheerful is to be well in mind, and every one knows that mind and body are bound up together; the health of tho one largely influences the health of the other. The cheerful heart, this sage reminds us, will make a good fight even against physical troubles, against sickness and pain and weakness, a much better fight than what he calls a 'broken spirit' will make—by which he means the temper that is ever seeing the worst, and imagining the worst, the temper of those who allow care to sit on them like an Old Man of the Sea. For this temper, too, exerts its physical effects; 'it drieth up the bones'—it takes all the sap and buoyancy and energy out of the body, and leaves its unhappy victim more or less unfit to grapple with the ordinary work of every-day life.

'Now this,' you will say, 'is very true, but also very commonplace. We don't want the Bible to tell us all this; certainly, we don't need a sermon about it.' But stay a moment. The

lesson may be very familiar, but have we learnt it ? Are we so deeply impressed with the mere wisdom of cheerfulness as to be enabled to dispense with all reminders of it ? In other words, are we all as cheerful and good-tempered as we might be, and have we made the cultivation of good temper what it ought to be made—a fine art ? To have a cheerful spirit is to have even more than physical advantages ; it is to be assured of mental and moral well-being also. It is to have an antidote not only for the headache, but the heartache. It is to be armed at almost all points against difficulty and trouble. It is to wrestle with disaster in something like the courageous spirit of the old martyrs, and, so wrestling, to conquer it at last. This, too we know ; but do we profit by the knowledge ? Cheerfulness is not only a virtue, but riches. Has a conviction of its value induced us to put forth every effort to acquire it ? I fear we cannot answer Yes to that question. The majority of us regard a quality like cheerfulness as something which, like the return of spring for example, is quite beyond our control, instead of seeking after it systematically, and insisting upon having it. Yes, insisting upon having it. ' How can we do that ? ' you will say ; ' cheerfulness is a matter of temperament. ' It is idle to talk about acquiring it. Can a leopard change his spots ? ' But is the

argument sound? This sage of ours, profound student of human nature as he was, evidently did not think so. He could not have deemed cheerfulness quite beyond our control, or what would be the use of his loud praises of it? If the despondent are naturally and incurably despondent, his laudation of the merry heart is very like the act of one who should wax enthusiastic about a banquet he had just partaken of, in the hearing of a starving man. Human beings may be born morally unequal, but they can improve their characters if they choose. Some are despondent by disposition; but training—self-training especially—can cure this radical defect. Too many of us allow ourselves to get into the habit of despondency; we accustom ourselves to dark spectacles until they become a necessity, and vision is impossible without them. Our features are so constantly fashioned into a frown that they come to wear the ugly shape naturally, and so at last lose the very power of smiling. There are people who have an acquired rather than a constitutional inability to look at the bright side of things.

There are people, moreover, who *do* see the bright side of things, but will not admit that it is bright. For them life is a picture in monochrome; it is all black. They are afflicted with the worst form of colour-blindness. There

is the sun shining overhead ; but its tiny specks become magnified into a huge blot, and eclipse all its radiance. You know the kind of people I mean. They are the people who make little troubles into big ones—big enough to blot out all the blessings, all the grounds for joy and gratitude, that their lives contain in such abundance. A prick of a pin, so to speak, drives into the background of consciousness all the elements of happiness that have been so freely vouchsafed to them. A petty annoyance, even the monotony of ' the common task, the daily round,' becomes with them a positive trouble, a grievance. They remind us of the little girl who said that if she had to go through the wearisome routine of dressing every morning, life was not worth living. The story is a fable of course ; but, like most fables, it teaches its moral.

None of us, I trust, belongs to the category I have been describing. We are not of those who nourish a perpetual grievance, and who would be very miserable without it. We all prefer, I think, to have the cheery temper that puts the best face on life's worries. But what I would have you remember is that we *can* have it if we choose. It is all a matter of self-discipline. Nothing is easier than to give way under misfortune ; nothing more natural than the tendency to think the worst is going to

happen, or that it has happened already, to believe that every passing cloud portends a storm, and that because the sky is dark therefore it will remain dark for ever. This tendency, so Judaism teaches, it is a solemn duty to contend against. You may say, perhaps, that it does not matter very much, that so small a thing as cheerfulness is not worth troubling about. But does it not matter very much? Is the moral and physical health which this medicine of cheerfulness will win for us something to be despised? Little virtues like cheerfulness are the small change of goodness, as useful in their way as the more precious coin. Is it not true moreover that they acquire an added importance from the fact that they are so generally underrated? What is more common than to find people straining after great excellences, but neglecting the little ones as beneath them? They reverence ideals that loom large on their mental horizon, but give scant heed to the commonplace aims that seem so easy of attainment. Many a novelist has justly satirized the fussy woman who is so deeply immersed in some grandiose scheme for redeeming half a world as to forget the claims of the children who are tugging at her sleeve. It is not charity only that begins at home; all virtue does.

Indeed, cheerfulness is itself a species of

charity—charity that we owe to those about us. For the merry heart does not confine its healing effects to the frame in which it beats. It is closely linked to other hearts; from the life its pulses sustain other lives borrow happiness or misery. To be cheerful is to be well; and is there any of us so forlorn as not to have at least one sympathetic soul to whom the thought of his well-being is a source of true joy? Besides this, cheerfulness and dejection are seeds that bear fruit each after its own kind. Do we not owe it to those who share our daily lives with us—those whom we are all but sworn to shield from grief—to meet events, as the Rabbins enjoin us to meet men, 'with a cheerful countenance'? A merry heart is a good medicine—yes, and it does good to many other hearts, for it sets free that ozone of cheerfulness which sweetens the home-atmosphere as with a breath of the scented ocean. We forget this too often. We say that only we ourselves are concerned, that if we are morose and complaining it matters to nobody. Never was there a greater, a more disastrous mistake. We have no right to wear a needlessly sad face—no right to exaggerate our troubles—no right, because it is rebellion against God, but also because cheerfulness is a debt due from us to those we love. How dare we make them miserable? 'There is one topic,' says Emerson,

'peremptorily forbidden to all well-bred, to all rational mortals, namely, their distempers. If you have not slept, or if you have headache, or sciatica, or thunderstroke, I beseech you, by all angels, to hold your peace, and not pollute the morning, to which all the housemates bring serene and pleasant thoughts, by corruption and groans. Come out in the azure. Love the day. Do not leave the sky out of your landscape.'

Yes, let us not leave the sky out of our landscape; for in so doing we blot it out of the landscape of other lives. Our querulousness —often about nothing at all—casts a gloom upon the home-life. Our small troubles are very big troubles to the members of our household; our fictitious pains very real ones to them whom our soul loveth. Whereas a little self-control, a little optimism, a little make-believe if you like, will help to raise for our dearest the fabric of genuine happiness. Ah, if we only had a little more imagination, and could picture to ourselves what our smallest deeds, our lightest words, make of other lives! A word of complaint, a sob, a sigh, may ruin the brightness of another heart for many an hour; a smile may make a day's sunshine for it. 'Care in the heart of a man maketh it stoop, but a good word maketh it glad.'[1] Think of it, I

[1] Prov. xii. 25.

entreat you. We are careful to give husband or wife, parent or child, the medicine that the human physician orders; let us see that we also give them the grateful medicine which the Divine Healer has prescribed, and which we may dispense from the rich store within our own control—the medicine of that cheerful heart which sheds about it the heaven it sees shining beyond the clouds.

THE PATIENCE OF GOD

'And the Lord said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first; and I will write upon the tables the words that were on the first tables, which thou brakest.'—EXODUS xxxiv. 1.

A BEAUTIFUL example of the Divine patience! Moses, deeming his people unworthy of the gift he was bringing them from heaven, had broken the tablets of the Law. The second Word written upon them denounced idolatry; and here was Israel dancing about a molten image! Their very first word declared that He who had redeemed the people from bondage, was the unseen Being who had spoken to them from the thick darkness of Sinai; and here were they saying of their idols, 'These be thy gods, O Israel, that brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.' [1] Surely such a people was fit only to be cast off. But such is not God's way. He does not cast off; He reclaims. He does not say, in the presence of moral failure, 'I have done with this man; he is hopeless.' But with infinite patience He begins His redemp-

[1] Exod. xxxii. 4.

tive task over again. Moreover, though men's revolt has set a gulf between them and Him, His own hands shall help to bridge it. The tables of the Law are broken—broken more surely by the people's transgression than by Moses' anger ; but others shall take their place, and God Himself will write their message upon them as before. A new life shall be built up on the fragments of the old. The gentle love of God shall triumph over human waywardness.

The new tablets were placed in the sanctuary and, with them, according to tradition,[1] the old broken ones. And thenceforward the people had not only a monument of the Divine patience but an exhortation to imitate it. Yes, to imitate it. For of what use is it to see the ideal, and to be no nobler for the vision, to behold the God of Israel, and yet to eat and drink ? And not for the people of old only was the exhortation. Those tables of stone, the whole and the broken, speak to the heart in every age. The patience of God calls to us all to be patient, tolerant, long-suffering. Some of us heed the admonition well enough. The teacher performs his life-task with pathetic perseverance, and nothing is more beautiful than the inexhaustible forbearance of the parent toward the child. Such hearts are not daunted by failure nor

[1] Berachoth, 14b.

soured by ingratitude ; they know how to begin over again, how to hew the new tables and write the loving message afresh. But some of us find the lesson hard to learn. We pay our way, we do not lie, neither do we steal—that is enough, we say ; these other sacrifices are beyond us, moral luxuries above our means. To bear and forbear, to forgive and forget, to return gentleness for rudeness—this is too much to ask. And yet we have just got to do it, if our love of goodness is to be something better than an empty phrase, if we really want to leave the world a little better and happier than we found it. Honesty, truthfulness, justice—these are excellent virtues, but they are not serviceable for all emergencies. There are times when other qualities are needed—times when healing has to be done, the sinner won back, the foe made a friend, the sullen cured, the despairing and the despised sent away with a glow in their hearts—times when the blight has to be purged from another life, when new tables have to be given in place of the old ones that are broken. And for these gracious tasks, patience, charity, toleration alone avail.

Toleration—we connect the word as a rule with religious differences. But that kind of tolerance is cheap enough in an age which wears its religion all too lightly. The toleration, religious or otherwise, that we need to learn is

that which is hard to practise—hard, because it means forbearance in the things upon which we feel strongly. A legend tells how once to Abraham there comes an aged traveller, whom the patriarch constrains to eat bread. 'Now give thanks,' he says, 'to the Most High God.' 'I cannot,' cries the stranger, 'for I do not believe in God.' Thereupon Abraham, his anger kindled, drives him from the house. But a voice calls from Heaven, 'Abraham, I have borne with this man all his life; couldst thou not have borne with him for a single hour?' It is the wrong done to *us*, the wrong that we feel, which the thought of the Divine patience is to teach us to forgive. God tolerates this sinner, whose life has been one denial of Him; shall we not be long-suffering towards those who, however much they may hurt us, cannot offer us the crowning offence that the sinner offers to God? 'Ah,' you will say with Heine, 'to forgive is *God's* business; *we* are only human.' Yes, we are; but it is the business of human beings to grow into closer likeness to the Divine. If not, why do they cumber the earth?

And let us never think that to be patient with the evil-doer is to encourage him. Transgression suffers no mightier rebuke than when gentleness is opposed to it. What can shame the sinner more than the contrast between his

offence and our forgiveness? No, we must distinguish between sin and the sinner. The one let us condemn with all our might; the other we must spare. Moses breaks the tables of the Law; he does right, for he is bound to protest against the flagrant iniquity that is being perpetrated before his eyes. 'Thou hast done well to break them'—so, according to the legend, [1] God declares to him. But that protest made, it has to be followed by the task of regeneration. The sin has been branded; and now the sinner is to be saved—saved by love. And so God's grace orders that new tablets shall replace the old ones which justice has destroyed.

There is a story told in the Talmud of a Rabbi who, stung by the repeated insults of his neighbour, determined to invoke punishment upon him. But, as he was meditating how to frame his supplication, he fell asleep. He interpreted that sleep as a sign and a warning from Heaven. Never again did he think of praying for vengeance upon his enemies. If some such Heaven-sent oblivion were to overtake us when we are smarting under a sense of injury, the world would be a far better place than it is.

But it is not injuries only that we have to tolerate. The whims and the foibles and the

[1] Aboth d' R. Nathan (ed. Schechter), 6a.

peculiarities of others call for patience, and too often call for it in vain. There are the tiresome people to whom we must show it. We know them well enough. They take good care of that. They come too soon and go too late; they talk an infinite deal of nothing. *Their* affairs and *their* ideas are the only things that matter; they are the men, and wisdom will die with them. We call them 'bores' nowadays, but Job of old knew them as his friends, and they were not the least of his afflictions. But he bears with them patiently, as he does with his other misfortunes. And we must do the same. I know of no greater test of character, no greater vindication of it.

And then there are the people about us—those who live under the same roof-tree, share the same life, with us. Here is the most splendid exercise-ground for patience—the most splendid because, I fear, it is the most neglected. 'Let a man,' say the Rabbins,[1] 'be long-suffering to all, but especially to those of his own household.' Is it a strange saying? No; for it is just towards those of our own household that we are least inclined to be patient. With a mere acquaintance we may be forbearing enough; we tolerate his opinions, though they clash never so violently with our own; his

[1] Yalkut to Exodus xxxii. 6.

uncivil word politeness, at any rate, bids us answer calmly; his eccentricities we ignore benevolently or indifferently. But the loved ones at home—those about whom, deep down below the surface, our heartstrings are fast entwined—how different is the measure we mete out to them! Their shortcomings, their tiresome ways, their faults of temper, are all set down scrupulously to their account; nothing is allowed for, nothing extenuated, nothing passed over. Is this right? Is it wise? Are we ourselves so free from failings that we can afford to be so severe, so exacting? Does not regard for the happiness of the home preach patience? Moreover, we glibly pass judgment on those around us; but are we sure we know them? We may live with a person for years, and yet not penetrate to his inner life. But one day, when he is gone and passed beyond the reach of blame or praise, we discover that we have misjudged him and condemned him unjustly. We sometimes think of God's all-seeing eye with terror; the thought should rather tranquillize us. For since God sees all, He reads the human heart—discerns its hidden excellences, measures its temptations. For the old proverb is true: 'To understand everything is to pardon everything.' Shall we not take a leaf out of God's book? Let us strive to know our dear ones

better while we have them, and to imagine the good we cannot always see—the good hidden by shyness, by reserve on their part, and by want of insight and sympathy in ourselves; for patent faults let us make allowances; and we shall be more patient than of yore. And so, when the inevitable parting has come, we shall not have to wish the loved one back again if only to confess that we have been harsh, to ask his pardon for having denied him ours. Love, and more love—that is what we all need—more love to make the mechanism of the home, of human fellowship, work more smoothly—more love to heal the wounds dealt by sin, to build up for others happiness out of misery, and a new life on the ruins of the old. It is the love that makes the broken tables not an impediment, but an incentive to the hewing of new ones, that writes the old commandments afresh with the pen of gentleness, and so endows them with an irresistible appeal.

SUBMISSION

'And Aaron was silent.' LEVITICUS x. 3.

THE English translation is probably inadequate. Aaron's wonderful fortitude showed itself, we may well believe, not in mere silence, which may have meant nothing more than self-control, a concealment of the rebellion that was seething in his soul, but in utter submission to the decrees, and implicit trust in the rectitude, of the Divine Master who had laid this heavy stroke upon him. This is often the significance of the Hebrew verb which meets us in the text. 'It is good for a man,' says the Prophet,[1] 'that he bear the yoke in his youth. Let him sit alone and keep silence, because God hath laid it upon him,' where, instead of 'keep silence,' we should rather read 'be patient,' or 'be trustful.' In other places the English Bible is more exact. 'My soul,' cries one Psalmist,[2] 'wait thou upon God;' 'O rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him,' says another[3]; 'Commune with your own heart upon your bed and be still,' says yet another.[4]

[1] Lam. iii. 27.
[2] Psalm lxii. 5.
[3] Psalm xxxvii. 7.
[4] Psalm iv. 4.

The root-word is the same in each case, and it denotes not silence, which is external and negative merely, but the stillness of faith, which is inward and positive. It is the condition of one who has fought his way through the storm-swept seas of doubt and trouble to the tranquil haven, who, surrendering himself at last to a Will far mightier and wiser than his, has, in the words of the inspired poet,[1] stilled and quieted his soul like a child with his mother.

Such, I think we may say, was Aaron's frame of mind on that tragic occasion. In a moment all the joy of his consecration-day had been turned into mourning. His two sons, suddenly struck down, lay dead in the very Sanctuary of which he had just been made the High Priest. And yet but a few words from Moses, and the father is forgotten in God's minister. The solemn truths which it is his sacred task to preach to others come to his own aid in his hour of dire need. The implicit faith in eternal rectitude, which it is his supreme duty to commend to his people, is to be especially potent with them seeing that it is to pass to their hearts straight from his own, the sublime elixir distilled from his own agony!

There is no incident more impressive in all the Bible. And to us, too, it powerfully calls,

[1] Psalm cxxxi. 2.

even as it called to the multitude that witnessed it in ancient days. 'Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward.'[1] The affliction of the High Priest of old is but a typical episode in the great human story; it has been paralleled countless times in the experience of both high and low. What man so happy as not to know sorrow? Escape it we cannot. How shall we meet it? This is the vital question. There are some who resent adversity, who rebel against it. They impeach the goodness or the might of Him who has given to men their one common heritage. Either God is indifferent to human suffering, or He is powerless to prevent it. So some of us cry, and a dull resentment against life and destiny takes possession of us, often to issue in a settled pessimism, or in misanthropy, or even in moral recklessness.

The story we are studying would save us from such a calamity. It exhorts us to hold fast to our faith when experience seems to cry out against it; it bids us be still when all life would sting us into passionate protest. And well does it do so. For who are we that we should judge the eternal God? 'Shall the clay say to Him that fashioneth it, What makest Thou?'[2] We are insignificant items in a scheme that is infinite, and yet we presume

[1] Job v. 7. [2] Isaiah xlv. 9.

to criticize it! The pawns on the chessboard, we cavil at the Hand that moves us. Think of a star criticizing its place and its destiny amid the unnumbered host of heaven. What absurdity! But do we—we men and women, with our brief, fragile lives—count for more in the sum of the infinite? Does humanity itself count for more—humanity, on whose behalf, rather than our own, we sometimes make our protest? Yes, sorrow is man's heritage, but part of that heritage is the impulse, peculiar to man, which makes him rebel against sorrow. It is our very humanity that gives suffering its keen edge. Our doubts, our despair, come from knowing, but not knowing enough. The ignorance of the brute, which saves him from that most exquisite pain—doubt of the wisdom that has sent it—is denied us. He lives in his own narrow world—we in the boundless universe which mind and soul reveal to us. We feel that we are part of a vast order, and we chafe because that order does not justify itself to us in every particular. Mystery presses upon us on every side. Something tells us that we are in the grasp of a Power we cannot escape, that there is a limitless continent of being and of life outside ourselves and those others who come within our orbit, and we are angry because we cannot explain its manifestations by our own canons.

But have we any right to be angry ? This vast life outside us, this all-encompassing mystery, this Power, not ourselves, that pounds and moulds us in our despite, verily as the potter the helpless clay—what is the temper our recognition of it ought rightly to beget in us ? Is it anger ? Is it revolt ? Is it even the *mood* of criticism ? Is it not a lowly patience ? Ought not the thought of our very helplessness, the sense of our being subject to forces that we cannot comprehend, much less control, make us feel our insignificance and therefore the folly of criticism ? The most momentous of all moral dramas is unfolded to us in the Book of Job. What is its final outcome ? The hero's own words set it forth. 'Behold I am of small account ; what shall I answer Thee ? I lay my hand upon my mouth.' [1] Silence—that, at the very least, represents the attitude which befits every rational mind.

But something more is due from us, as the High Priest of old felt when his sons lay lifeless at his feet. This Power that holds us in its grip—is it merely impersonal, careless, soulless ? Are we indeed nothing better than the toys of heedless forces—we mortals, whose little tragedy is for us so big, so pathetic ? Or are we not rather in the hands of One who takes *our* point

[1] Job xl. 4.

of view, of One who, infinitely majestic though He is, yet deems the tragedy real, and sees the tears in it ? In a word, is there not a beating heart behind phenomena ? Does not love plan even our sorrows ?

Surely we shall think so, if we think at all. Life is not all sadness ; it holds many joys. Whence do they come ? The most precious, the most lasting of them spring from love—from human love. Whence comes that ? Shall we ignore these preponderating factors of human experience, and fix our thoughts only upon its sombre elements ? Or shall we not rather say that the joy is the true revelation of God's will, the love the real reflection of His nature ? Let us remember that, as far as we can see, it is the joy which is slowly yet surely routing the pain. And, as to the rest, shall we not confess that if we cannot whlloy explain affliction and sorrow, it is because we are not God, but men, that the clue is not, and cannot be, with us, the creatures, but is, and must be, with Him, the Creator ? Arguing from the known to the unknown, shall we not say that the beneficence which stands clearly revealed to our gaze in one half of life must surely exist, though hidden by an impenetrable veil, in the other half ?

This, I repeat, is the temper that becomes us as rational beings. The argument is, as I

have said, from the known to the unknown, from the justice and the solicitude that speak to us with no uncertain voice from some of the facts of experience—from the joy of living, from the beauty of the world, above all from the treasures of human affection—to the pain and the grief where all clue to the justice and the solicitude is lost, or, at best, is doubtful. It is upon this argument that we must build. God, who blesses us at so many moments of our lives, cannot fail us at others. He, whose marvellous might we have proved so often, can never be powerless. 'His mercy endureth for ever.'

This is the teaching of reason. But something else whispers the truth to us; it is that mysterious voice within our hearts which proclaims God and His goodness, and impels us to cast ourselves without reserve, without thought, upon His justice and His care. The cold intellect derides the impulse, but it is ineradicable; and to it men return and submit themselves again and again. 'O rest in the Lord'—the words are the Psalmist's, but they express the doctrine of the human soul. We know to what lovely music Mendelssohn has set them. We know, too, how, when the survivors of the wreck of the *Stella* were tossing on the sea in an open boat during a terrible night, their fast-failing courage suddenly revived as

one of their number sang out that song of trust and resignation. The music, and the words that inspired it, wrought their wondrous effect. It was the triumph of faith—of faith prepared for either fortune, ready to accept submissively God's decree of life or of death—of faith springing up mysteriously in the heart like a Heavenly flower, and stilling its fears with the certitude of eternal goodness. We cannot analyze this temper. We can only bow before it in wonder and homage, and pray that it may come to bless us in our turn.

THE FADING OF THE LEAF

'We all do fade as the leaf.' ISAIAH lxiv. 6.

ONE especial phenomenon marks the presence of Autumn. It is that which our Prophet uses as an image to point the moral of his homily. It is the fading of the leaf. Those who, with the memory of the Spring or the Summer in their hearts, go out into the country at this season of the year find its aspect transformed. And of all the changes it has undergone, not the least striking is that which has been wrought in the appearance of the trees. The green of their foliage has given place to other tints, to yellow and brown, to russet and crimson.

It is a wondrous change, and the old Hebrew poets, keenly sensitive to the shifting moods of external Nature, were not slow to feel and to note it. And for them, as for most minds, the characteristic sign of Autumn had a sombre significance. The fading of the leaf was the herald of decay, the emblem of the transitoriness of earthly things, of human existence, of human goodness. 'We all do fade as the leaf,' cries our

Prophet, and he is thinking less, perhaps, of the swiftness with which life passes away than of the instability of men's higher yearnings and endeavours. The Psalmists, too, can find no apter picture of the happiness that blesses the virtuous than that suggested by some stately tree whose leaf retains its freshness to the end. For these old-world poets the fading of the leaf was a mournful phenomenon. It was the very type of all that is sad in human character and experience.

To us moderns also it presents itself in the same guise. But—and this is a notable difference—it has another aspect for us too. Still, as of old, the fading leaf speaks eloquently of the dying year and the passing of life, and no one can look upon the changed face of Nature at this autumn-tide without chastened feelings, without a pang of regret for the summer days that are no more. But, mingled with this effect, is another and a more pleasing one. The mellow hues of Autumn appeal to the æsthetic side of our nature and delight us with their new-found beauty. New-found I say, because their splendour seems to have won full recognition only in these days. Only of late have the sober colours of the Autumn leaves come to be generally acclaimed as beautiful. And so the same object, seen from another side, tempers and corrects the impression

created by one aspect of it. The fading leaf warns us that Nature's annual pageant is once more drawing to a close, that the year is waning fast. But those who have eyes to see, it comforts with its own loveliness, with the vision, moreover, of a divine solicitude that remains unchanged through all earth's changes.

It is an instructive thought. Life has its Autumn, which true insight may clothe in beauty. It has its elements of sadness in which a larger outlook may discern compensatory joys. The fading leaf typifies for us not only the dying year, but life's decline. Our days, we reflect, are passing swiftly, and old age is coming on apace. But the very phenomenon which awakes these thoughts rebukes their sadness. See what a delight these exquisite tints have come to be for us! We have learnt to find some consolation in them for the passing of the summer. And shall they not comfort us too under the oppressive thought that life's summer is ended? Shall they not give us the calm mind that is able to rejoice even while recognizing the swiftness with which the years come and go? 'We are growing old,' we cry. 'What has not time taken from us! What have we not lost with our years!' Yes, but what have we not gained if we have lived in any worthy sense at all—gained in the tender affection and the grateful regard of those we

have loved and helped, nay, in the very memory of the love and the help itself, a memory that will continue to bless us to the end ! ' We are growing old,' we cry ; ' every day as it passes steals something from the time before us, gives us less space in which to enjoy, in which to work, in which to make up the arrears.' But what of the work we have done ? If we judge it justly, will it not show itself greater than we thought it ? ' We have failed,' we say. But what of our success, of the success we have wrung from failure itself, the precious discipline we have found in worldly disappointment, the strength that moral defeat has imparted to our character ? Let us look life fairly in the face—' see it steadily, and see it whole'—and even at the recurring moments when we feel how quickly it is slipping from us we shall discern its rich solace. When the fading leaf fills us with its melancholy we shall perceive and confess how gracious it is.

And what of those who are not merely growing old, but are old already ? They indeed are like the fading leaf. With the signs of life's decline upon them, they yet possess a charm all their own. Old age is gracious to the keener sight. What is more beautiful than the patience, the resignation, the sense of contentment and peace of those who feel that they have served faithfully in the army of the Lord,

and are only waiting for their discharge? Do we not all know of some face, lined and withered, yet, like the face of the Lawgiver of old, shining with gentleness and love, the afterglow of a lifetime of integrity and loving-kindness? And this beauty may always deck the fading leaf. Some one, I think, has written an essay upon the theme, How to grow old gracefully. There is only one way, and it is within the reach of the humblest; it is the old, old way which will serve as long as human nature endures. It is the way of righteousness. Let the Spring and the Summer be fair and fruitful, and the Autumn will come in glorious garb. Let youth and manhood be sweet and lovable, and old age will be clothed in beauty.

And the beauty will be within, not a delight for the onlooker only, but a wellspring of joy for the possessor, whose waters never fail. For age has its joys no less real because they are tranquil, far removed from the feverish pleasures of the world. There is the happiness bred of achievement, of the knowledge that the fight has been fought and the work is done, and that nothing remains but to hand back the great trust of life to the Giver. We all remember that touching picture drawn by Thackeray of the last moments of the old colonel, who, dazed by the presence of death, thinks himself a school-

boy once more. He fancies he hears the morning-bell calling the boys to school, and he makes the old familiar answer, '*Adsum*—I am here.' Such is the temper of the good man when he feels the final summons at hand. He has done his task, and he is ready to meet the Master. Trials, sorrows, he has had—partings, the most bitter of them all. But God has been good to him, dulling the edge of grief, transfiguring adversity into blessing. In the vista of the bygone years the things that once seemed to be disasters fall into their place as parts of a benign scheme, and are seen to have made for his peace. For age can see life as a harmonious unity—see it 'mellowed and softened as with sunset-glow.' It can 'see the world as from a height, with rapt, prophetic eyes.' It is an inestimable advantage. It is the compensation graciously vouchsafed to those who are bidding farewell to life—this seeing of life in its true proportions.

Nor surely is this all. The leaf fades, and as it fades is glorious. Is that glory of the present only? Or does it not carry us in thought into the future, and become the promise of a different splendour—the splendour of a new Spring, of life that will begin afresh when this decaying life shall have ended? That is the truth whispered to us by Nature at this season of the year. It

is the truth of Immortality. We learnt it in the Springtime when the leaves quivered on the once-bare branches and proclaimed the undying renewal of life. And we may learn it now when, faded and changed, they bid us look forward to their resurrection.

And so in youth we *hear* of Immortality; in our riper years we come to cherish it, to understand all that it means for life's weary pilgrims. Here, then, is the true compensation, the real harmony which our finer sensibilities can detect beneath the jarring notes of experience. The fading leaf has a beauty of its own, but it acquires an added charm by reason of the splendour of which it prophesies—splendour which shall delight us when the Autumn is dead. Our searching trials are transformed one by one as they come to us, and redeem our lot from sadness. But the great transfiguring lies 'beyond these voices,' where all our disquiet shall be stilled in an imperishable peace, and our little life be merged and fulfilled in an ampler being.

Hast thou beneath another's stern control
Bent thy sad soul,
And wasted sacred hopes and precious tears?
Yet calm thy fears!
For thou canst gain, even from the bitterest part,
A stronger heart.

Hast thou found life a cheat, and worn in vain
Its iron chain ?
Has thy soul bent beneath its heavy bond ?—
Look thou beyond !
If life is bitter, there for ever shine
Hopes more divine.

"AMEN!"

'Then the Prophet Jeremiah said, Amen; the Lord do so.' JEREMIAH xxviii. 6.

AMEN—the word is familiar to you all; it is the one Hebrew expression known even to those who are quite ignorant of Hebrew. Among the ancient Israelites it had various uses. Always implying confirmation of something said or heard, it would round off a prayer, or lend an added solemnity to an oath, or, as in the text, indicate acceptance of a statement or a promise.[1] In this last sense it was especially employed as an expression of submission to the ordinances of God and of belief in His trustworthiness. Borrowed from the Hebrew Bible, the word has passed into the language of every civilized people. But its use is now limited to prayerful utterances. As a devout exclamation it is to be heard in Mosque and Church and Synagogue alike.

The word has a peculiar solemnity. It seems to bind with singular force the heart

[1] See Shebuoth, 36a.

and the conscience of him who utters it. You remember what an effective use Shakespeare has made of the ejaculation in his play of Macbeth. Fresh from his murderous deed, Macbeth tells how Duncan's attendants, terrified and but half-awake, mutter some words of prayer—

> One cried 'God bless us,' and 'Amen,' the other,
> As they had seen me with these hangman's hands.
> Listening their fear, I could not say 'Amen,'
> When they did say 'God bless us.'
> But wherefore could not I pronounce 'Amen'?
> I had most need of blessing; and 'Amen'
> Stuck in my throat.

The old Rabbins attached great importance to the word as a devotional utterance. 'He,' they say,[1] 'who cries "Amen" with all his might'—that is with all fervour—'for him the gates of Paradise are opened.' And a legend,[2] amplifying this idea, tells how, in the Messianic age, when, in response to the world-wide proclamation of God's kingdom, the sinners in purgatory answer 'Amen,' the angels, at the Divine bidding, will set them free and lift them to Heaven. The first of these sayings was doubtless suggested by the ignorance of Hebrew, the language of public worship, which characterized the Jews even in Talmudic times. Despite that ignorance, they had, they were

[1] Shabbath, 119b. [2] Yalkut to Isaiah xxvi. 2.

assured, only to follow the Service with devout hearts in order to be quit of their duty. Let them but cry Amen with all earnestness, and they would get nearer to God and to the beatitude that dwells at His right Hand for evermore.

It is a beautiful thought, as true as it is beautiful. One simple prayer—it may be only a single word—uttered with prayerful spirit, may fulfil the purpose of worship, and lift the soul into the company of the Highest. And possibly it was this idea that Handel had in his mind when writing the final chorus of his Messiah. It is set to this one word—Amen; and in it the great master seems to have gathered up the echoes of all the elaborate hymns of praise to Almighty God that have preceded it, and woven them into one glorious, yet simple pæan. The great ones have sung their songs of adoration; now the humbler folk shall sing their song. It consists of but one short word; but it is as splendid as anything that has gone before it.

We may ponder the twofold lesson thus taught us. God wants from us only the homage of which we are capable; though less will not content Him. And then there is the cognate truth that, for the success of public worship, it is not necessary that we should sympathetically follow every detail of the Service. No

form of common prayer can exactly express the ideas and emotions of the individual congregant, with his separate life and special needs. Moreover, he himself is not always the same. His frame of mind and his spiritual wants differ from year to year, even from week to week. It is enough if he open his soul to the larger, the inarticulate message of the Service—the message which transcends the literal significance of the words themselves. It is enough if he surrender himself to the influence of the spiritual atmosphere diffused by the hour and the place. His Amen suffices to bring him in sight of the celestial realm, even though it be the only word he repeats of those that lie before him on the printed page.

Historically, as we have seen, Amen was not a prayerful word only; it was used at times in ordinary speech, and would often do duty for a far longer utterance. Here again a lesson is suggested to us. There are people who can do little more than say Amen to the high aspirations that uplift and consecrate other lives; they have not the power to say more. The world's battles are fought by a few; the majority must be content to look on. But even the majority can do something to ensure the success of the momentous struggle. They can encourage the warriors. When truth and

right are assailed they can at least defend it with earnestness of heart and fervour of speech; they can show that if they cannot actively work, they can applaud. And such applause is more grateful, more potent, than most of us think. Even the finest spirits and the most strenuous workers do not wholly live in a state of detachment, caring naught for the approbation of their fellows. Self-contained as they seem, these strong souls have their hours of weariness when the thought of the many who are with them in sympathy comes like a refreshing draught to the jaded wayfarer. And, if this be so, how much more precious is that thought to the toiler of lower degree. No worker is altogether compensated by his work; he hungers for signs of sympathy to solace and support him. Let us not be of those who withhold them; let us not fail, either through thoughtlessness or an over-delicate reticence, to say our encouraging word, to breathe our 'God-speed,' to say our Amen, that means so much, that costs so little.

But what I have urged thus far must not be taken without some qualification. It is good to say Amen; but it must be said fervently—with all one's might, as the Rabbins urge. And indeed they warn us[1] against saying it without

[1] Berachoth, 47a.

having heard the prayer to which it should be the response, and against saying it too often. We must beware, then, of being merely echoes. There are people who never have opinions of their own, even on the most solemn questions, because they never try to get them. This is surely wrong. Every one owes it to himself to get the truth about all things that comes within his ken. He must not be content to accept it at second hand, to say Amen to every benediction. There are great questions which it behoves us to probe as far as we can—questions affecting the welfare of the State, of the community, of our fellow-men at large, questions too of religion, touching our own vital well-being. We have no right to surrender our conscience into the keeping of any one in regard to such high matters. Whatever intellect God has given us, we owe it to God to use. We can no more let it rust without sin than we can neglect our bodily powers without sin. We are answerable for our opinions, but also for our lack of opinions.

But here again there are limits. The Amen of the text is a proclamation of faith in the Divine promises, an expression of submission to the Divine decrees. Such Amens we ought always to be uttering. Let us probe and ponder and reason ; but let us never surrender that trust in the great verities of religion which is,

so to speak, a function of the larger intellect. An aged minister, who has thought about the great riddles of life as deeply as most people, sent me the following words in a letter written a day or two ago: 'In this age of arguing we are too much given to base our faith on logic, instead of holding out our hand to be taken and led by the Eternal Love.' They are words worth remembering. Does not reason count for too much nowadays? We are apt to think—in our earlier years more especially—that the intellect is all-sufficient for the solution of the most difficult problems, and that what it does not approve is by that very fact discredited. But as we grow older, and the years come and go 'that bring the philosophic mind,' we change our views. The inadequacy of reason as the sole test of truth becomes clearer. Its limitations stand out in sharper relief against the background of the infinite, and the soul, with its mystic intuitions, finds more attentive hearing. We are less certain than we were—less certain, that is to say, about ourselves, but more certain about God, more ready to trust since we cannot know, more willing to cry Amen with childlike confidence to the persistent message of our hearts. Happy those who yield to this temper! For to them God comes with His unspeakable peace.

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